

ELLEN G. WHITE ESTATE

**SPIRIT OF
PROPHECY
COUNSELS
RELATING TO
CHURCH-STATE
RELATIONSHIPS**

**Spirit of Prophecy
Counsels Relating To
Church-State
Relationships**

Ellen G. White

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Overview

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About the Author

Ellen G. White (1827-1915) is considered the most widely translated American author, her works having been published in more than 160 languages. She wrote more than 100,000 pages on a wide variety of spiritual and practical topics. Guided by the Holy Spirit, she exalted Jesus and pointed to the Scriptures as the basis of one's faith.

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A compilation of E. G. White materials supplemented with
illuminating statements of denominational leaders and significant
General Conference Session actions.

Assembled for the Study of the Committee on Church-State
Relationships

1964

A Word From the Compilers

For seventy years, the administrators of the Seventh-day Adventist Church have been confronted with the question of the acceptance of tax exemptions, grants and gifts. The whole problem is one closely interwoven with the positions which the church has taken on the question of the separation of church and state.

The Lord, through His messenger, gave to this people in 1895 specific counsel touching on these points. The question of the acceptance of tax exemptions for our churches and for church properties and the question of the acceptance of a grant of 12,000 acres of land in Africa called forth these counsels in a practical setting. These counsels which gave guidance to church leaders in the middle 1890's have often been referred to in meeting problems since that time which fall into the category of the acceptance of government grants.

At the request of the Chairman of a large committee on church-state relationships, this document presenting all the materials available from Ellen G. White which might have a bearing on the question has been assembled in the office of the Ellen G. White Estate. The White Estate was specifically requested to make the compilation full and complete as we deal with the larger question of church-state relationships as brought out through all of the E. G. White writings. This has led to the manuscript of nearly 200 pages. Unquestionably the full body of materials has a bearing on any one specific problem.

In the presentation of the matter of tax exemption and grants, the historical background has been provided from correspondence and minutes, enabling the reader to know exactly what matters were before Ellen White at the time she wrote. Some may find the record seemingly too detailed and full. The questions, however, are large and involved, and the compilers felt that the members of the committee would appreciate all that might be available in the way of historical background. In the detailed presentation, sentiments, attitudes and positions as they relate to the questions are reflected.

Inasmuch as this section constitutes the heart of the compilation, it has been run on colored stock so that it may be quickly identified.

No attempt has been made to bring into this compilation materials relating to Sunday legislation and the attitudes of Seventh-day Adventists to such legislation. This is a question by itself and a compilation in this area would be sizeable.

There are some matters which are thought to be somewhat related which have been introduced in the closing section such as the military draft, labor unions, etc.

The compilers had before them all available E. G. White materials consisting not only of the current books, but of periodical articles, out-of-print pamphlets, and the E. G. White manuscript files. It was Mrs. White's expectation that her writings, left by her with the Board of Trustees, would continue to serve the church to the end of time. That this compilation may be of service to those who must deal with the presentday problems in the question of government grants is the sincere wish of the compilers.

Arthur L. White, Secretary

Ellen G. White Estate

Washington, D. C. November 19, 1964

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I—Some Basic Principles—God’s Government and Earthly Governments

Their spheres, methods, principles;
God the Supreme Ruler—governments
of earth under His control;
Man a free moral agent—religious liberty
a right of all, etc.

God The Supreme Ruler—Man A Free Moral Agent

As the Supreme Ruler of the universe, God has ordained laws for the government not only of all living beings, but of all the operations of nature. Everything, whether great or small, animate or inanimate, is under fixed laws which cannot be disregarded.... But while everything in nature is governed by natural law, man alone, as an intelligent being, capable of understanding its requirements, is amenable to moral law. To man alone, the crowning work of His creation, God has given a conscience to realize the sacred claims of the divine law, and a heart capable of loving it as holy, just, and good; and of man prompt and perfect obedience is required. Yet God does not compel him to obey; he is left a free moral agent.—[Selected Messages 1:216](#).

God Does Not Coerce The Will

To deprive man of the freedom of choice would be to rob him of his prerogative as an intelligent being, and make him a mere automaton. It is not God’s purpose to coerce the will. Man was created a free moral agent.—[Patriarchs and Prophets, 331, 332](#).

[5]

Principles Of God’s Government

The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God’s government; He desires only the service of love; and love cannot be

commanded; it cannot be won by force or authority. Only by love is love awakened.—[The Desire of Ages, 22](#).

God Never Forces Man's Conscience

God never forces the will or the conscience; but Satan's constant resort—to gain control of those whom he cannot otherwise seduce—is compulsion by cruelty. Through fear or force he endeavors to rule the conscience, and to secure homage to himself. To accomplish this, he works through both religious and secular authorities, moving them to the enforcement of human laws in defiance of the law of God.—[The Great Controversy, 591](#).

Man Not Compelled To Comply

[6]

The Lord Jesus came to our world full of mercy, life, and light, ready to save those who should come unto Him. But He can save no one against his will. God does not force the conscience; He does not torture the body that He may compel men to compliance with His law. All this work is after the order of Satan....

The Lord has made it apparent that He proffers to the sinner the privilege of cooperating with God. He gives light, and furnishes evidence of the truth.—[The Youth's Instructor, August 17, 1893](#); reprinted in [Sons and Daughters of God, 182](#).

God Rules By Love, Not Compulsion

The laws of God are designed to bring His people closer to Himself. He will save them from the evil and lead them to the good if they will be led, but force them He never will.—[Testimonies for the Church 5:445](#).

God does not employ compulsory measures; love is the agent which He uses to expel sin from the heart.—[Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, 77](#).

It is not the fear of punishment, or the hope of everlasting reward, that leads the disciples of Christ to follow Him.—[The Desire of Ages, 480](#).

[7]

Comment On [Joshua 24:15](#)

Joshua desired to lead them [the Israelites] to serve God, not by compulsion, but willingly. Love to God is the very foundation of religion. To engage in His service merely from hope of reward or fear of punishment, would avail nothing. Open apostasy would not be more offensive to God than hypocrisy and mere formal Worship.—[Patriarchs and Prophets, 523.](#)

Laws Of Earthly Governments Should Be In Harmony With Law Of Jehovah

[8]

God would have the rulers of the nations know that He is the Supreme Ruler. Those who preside over the affairs of nations should realize that there is a King of kings. The man who does not know God as his Father, and Jesus Christ as the only begotten Son of the infinite God, can not rule wisely. He who has been placed where he has authority over others should seek the Lord for wisdom, that he may govern wisely the subjects of God's kingdom. An earthly ruler can not exercise authority wisely or set an example that is safe to follow, unless he obtains wisdom from the God who is too wise to err and too good to do injustice to His human subjects.

In the law of the kingdom of God who rules the sinless inhabitants of heaven are to be found the principles that should lie at the foundation of the laws of earthly governments. The laws of these governments should be in harmony with the law of Jehovah, the standard by which all created beings are to be judged. No man should be forced to act in harmony with human laws that are in direct opposition to the law that God has given.—E. G. White [Letter 187, 1903](#), p. 5.

Freedom Of Choice A God-Given Right

(See [Daniel 3:29](#))

The king of Babylon endeavored to spread abroad before all the peoples of earth his conviction that the power and authority of the God of the Hebrews was worthy of supreme adoration. And God was pleased with the effort of the king to show Him reverence, and

to make the royal confession of allegiance as widespread as was the Babylonian realm.

It was right for the king to make public confession, and to seek to exalt the God of heaven above all other gods; but in endeavoring to force his subjects to make a similar confession of faith and to show similar reverence, Nebuchadnezzar was exceeding his right as a temporal sovereign. He had no more right, either civil or moral, to threaten men with death for not worshiping God, than he had to make the decree consigning to the flames all who refused to worship the golden image. God never compels the obedience of man. He leaves all free to choose whom they will serve.—[Prophets and Kings, 510, 511.](#)

Christ's Kingdom Not Established By Force Of Arms But By [9] Implanting A New Principle In The Heart

They [the Jews] expected the Messiah to prove His claims by mighty deeds of conquest, to establish His empire on the ruins of earthly kingdoms. This expectation Christ answered in the parable of the sower. Not by force of arms, not by violent interpositions, was the kingdom of God to prevail, but by the implanting of a new principle in the hearts of men.

“He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man.” [Matthew 13:37](#). Christ had come, not as a king, but as a sower; not for the overthrow of kingdoms, but for the scattering of seed; not to point His followers to earthly triumphs and national greatness, but to a harvest to be gathered after patient toil and through losses and disappointments.—[Christ's Object Lessons, 35.](#)

God's Government In Contrast With Earthly Governments

The germ in the seed grows by the unfolding of the life principle which God has implanted. Its development depends upon no human power. So it is with the kingdom of Christ. It is a new creation. Its principles of development are the opposite of those that rule the kingdoms of this world. Earthly governments prevail by physical force; they maintain their dominion by war; but the founder of the new kingdom is the Prince of Peace. The Holy Spirit represents

worldly kingdoms under the symbol of fierce beasts of prey; but Christ is “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” [John 1:29](#). In His plan of government there is no employment of brute force to compel the conscience. The Jews looked for the kingdom of God to be established in the same way as the kingdoms of the world. To promote righteousness they resorted to external measures. They devised methods and plans. But Christ implants a principle. By implanting truth and righteousness, He countertworks error and sin.—[Christ’s Object Lessons, 77](#).

The Kingdom Of Christ Not An Earthly Dominion

The kingdom of God comes not with outward show. The gospel of the grace of God, with its spirit of self-abnegation, can never be in harmony with the spirit of the world. The two principles are antagonistic. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” [1 Corinthians 2:14](#).

But today in the religious world there are multitudes who, as they believe, are working for the establishment of the kingdom of Christ as an earthly and temporal dominion. They desire to make our Lord the ruler of the kingdoms of this world, the ruler in its courts and camps, its legislative halls, its palaces and market places. They expect Him to rule through legal enactments, enforced by human authority. Since Christ is not now here in person, they themselves will undertake to act in His stead, to execute the laws of His kingdom. The establishment of such a kingdom is what the Jews desired in the days of Christ. They would have received Jesus, had He been willing to establish a temporal dominion, to enforce what they regarded as the laws of God, and to make them the expositors of His will and the agents of His authority. But He said, “My kingdom is not of this World.” [John 18:36](#). He would not accept the earthly throne.

The government under which Jesus lived was corrupt and oppressive; on every hand were crying abuses,—extortion, intolerance, and grinding cruelty. Yet the Saviour attempted no civil reforms. He attacked no national abuses, nor condemned the national enemies. He did not interfere with the authority or administration of those in power. He who was our example kept aloof from earthly

governments. Not because He was indifferent to the woes of men, but because the remedy did not lie in merely human and external measures. To be efficient, the cure must reach men individually, and must regenerate the heart.

Not by the decisions of courts or councils or legislative assemblies, not by the patronage of worldly great men, is the kingdom of Christ established, but by the implanting of Christ’s nature in humanity through the work of the Holy Spirit. “As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” [John 1:12, 13](#). Here is the only power that can work the uplifting of mankind. And the human agency for the accomplishment of this work is the teaching and practicing of the word of God.—[The Desire of Ages, 508-510](#).

Settling Temporal Affairs Not A Part Of Christ’s Work

“And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.”...

The Saviour’s mission on earth was fast drawing to a close. Only a few months remained for Him to complete what He had come to do, in establishing the kingdom of His grace. Yet human greed would have turned Him from His work to take up the dispute over a piece of land. But Jesus was not to be diverted from His mission. His answer was, “Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?”

Jesus could have told this man just what was right. He knew the right in the case; but the brothers were in a quarrel because both were covetous. Christ virtually said, It is not My work to settle controversies of this kind. He came for another purpose, to preach the gospel, and thus to arouse men to a sense of eternal realities.

In Christ’s treatment of this case is a lesson for all who minister in His name. When He sent forth the twelve, He said, “As ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.” [Matthew 10:7, 8](#). They were not to settle the temporal affairs of the people. Their work was to persuade men to be reconciled to God.—[Christ’s Object Lessons, 253, 254](#).

[12]

Christ's Kingdom A Spiritual Kingdom

Again and again Christ had been asked to decide legal and political questions. But He refused to interfere in temporal matters. He knew that in the political world there were iniquitous proceedings and great tyranny. But His only exposure of these was the proclamation of Bible truth. To the great multitudes that thronged His steps He presented the pure, holy principles of the law of God and spoke of the blessing found in obeying these principles. With authority from on high He enforced the importance of justice and mercy. But He refused to become entangled in personal disputes.

Christ stood in our world as the Head of the great spiritual kingdom that He came to our world to establish—the kingdom of righteousness. His teaching made plain the ennobling, sanctifying principles that govern this kingdom. He showed that justice and mercy and love are the controlling powers in Jehovah's kingdom.—*Testimony for the Church*, Vol. 9, p. 218.

[13] **Subjects Of Christ's Kingdom Not Recognized By Worldly Kingdoms**

Contrary to worldly kingdoms, Christ does not find His subjects—He makes them. Those who stand under the bloodstained banner of Prince Emmanuel are the subjects of a kingdom not recognized by worldly kingdoms, whose subjects have wandered from their allegiance to God, from their obedience to the law of His kingdom....

I am come, Christ said, to set up a new kingdom. Except a man be born of the Spirit, he cannot be enrolled as a subject of My kingdom....

God's commandment-keeping people stand under the broad shield of Omnipotence; the commandment-breakers under the ensign of the man of sin, who thought to change times and laws. But he could not do this; he only claimed to do it.—[Special Testimony to Battle Creek Church](#), 10, 11.

Christ Does Not Compel—He Desires Only Voluntary Service

It is no part of Christ’s mission to compel men to receive Him. It is Satan, and men actuated by his spirit, who seek to compel the conscience. Under a pretense of zeal for righteousness, men who are confederated with evil angels sometimes bring suffering upon their fellowmen in order to convert them to their ideas of religion; but Christ is ever showing mercy, ever seeking to win by the revealing of His love. He can admit no rival in the soul, nor accept of partial service; but He desires only voluntary service, the willing surrender of the heart under the constraint of love.—[The Acts of the Apostles, 541.](#)

Freedom Through A Knowledge Of Truth

[14]

“If ye continue in my words, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

These words offended the Pharisees. The nation’s long subjection to a foreign yoke, they disregarded, and angrily exclaimed, “We be Abraham’s seed, and were never in bondage to any man; how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?” Jesus looked upon these men, the slaves of malice, whose thoughts were bent upon revenge, and sadly answered, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.” They were in the worst kind of bondage,—ruled by the spirit of evil.

Every soul that refuses to give himself to God is under the control of another power. He is not his own. He may talk of freedom, but he is in the most abject slavery. He is not allowed to see the beauty of truth, for his mind is under the control of Satan. While he flatters himself that he is following the dictates of his own judgment, he obeys the will of the prince of darkness. Christ came to break the shackles of sin—slavery from the soul. “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” “The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” sets us “free from the law of sin and death.”

In the work of redemption there is no compulsion. No external force is employed. Under the influence of the Spirit of God, a man is left free to choose whom he will serve. In the change that takes place when the soul surrenders to Christ, there is the highest sense

of freedom. The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself. True, we have no power to free ourselves from Satan's control; but when we desire to be set free from sin, and in our great need cry out for a power out of and above ourselves, the powers of the soul are imbued with the divine energy of the Holy Spirit, and they obey the dictates of the will in fulfilling the will of God.

- [15] The only condition upon which the freedom of man is possible, is that of becoming one with Christ. "The truth shall make you free;" and Christ is the truth. Sin can triumph only by enfeebling the mind, and destroying the liberty of the soul. Subjection to God is restoration to one's self,—to the true glory and dignity of man. The divine law, to which we are brought into subjection, is "the law of liberty."—[The Desire of Ages, 466](#).

True Object Of National Government

To Nebuchadnezzar the king the true object of national government was represented under the figure of a great tree, whose height "reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth: the leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all;" under its shadow the beasts of the field dwelt, and among its branches the birds of the air had their habitation. [Daniel 4:11, 12](#). This representation shows the character of a government that fulfills God's purpose—a government that protects and upbuilds the nation.—[Education, 175](#).

A Government That Savors Not Of Oppression

- [16] In the dream of Nebuchadnezzar the true object of government is beautifully represented by the great tree "whose leaves were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all; under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and upon whose branches the fowls of the heaven had their habitation." Now if God had called a man, or any set of men at Battle Creek to rule in any sense, that representation of the tree shows the only kind of ruling acceptable to Him,—a government that protects, restores, relieves, but never savors of oppression. The poor especially are to be kindly treated.... Aid is to be given to the oppressed, and not one soul that bears the image of God is to

be placed at the footstool of a human being. The greatest possible kindness and freedom are to be granted to the purchase of the blood of Christ.—*MS 29, 1895*.

Duty Of State To Protect Liberty Of Conscience

To protect liberty of conscience is the duty of the state, and this is the limit of its authority in matters of religion. Every secular government that attempts to regulate or enforce religious observances by civil authority, is sacrificing the very principle for which the evangelical Christians so nobly struggled.—[The Great Controversy, 201](#).

Rights Of All To Be Acknowledged

The Lord Jesus demands our acknowledgement of the rights of every man. Men’s social rights, and their rights as Christians, are to be taken into consideration. All are to be treated with refinement and delicacy, as the sons and daughters of God.—[Gospel Workers, 123](#).

All Earthly Power Under God’s Control

[17]

All earthly powers are under the control of the Infinite one. To the mightiest ruler, to the most cruel oppressor, He says, “Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further.” God’s power is constantly exercised to counteract the agencies of evil: He is ever at work among men, not for their destruction, but for their correction and preservation.—[Patriarchs and Prophets, 694](#).

All Rulers Are Under God’s Rule

Who, then, is to be regarded as the Ruler of the nations?—The Lord God Omnipotent. All kings, all rulers, all nations, are His, under His rule and government.—[Fundamentals of Christian Education, 505](#).

Kings And Nations Under God's Rule

The Lord God omnipotent reigneth. All kings, all nations, are His, under His rule and government. His resources are infinite. The wise man declares, "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will."

Those upon whose actions hang the destinies of nations, are watched over with a vigilance that knows no relaxation by Him who "giveth salvation unto kings," to whom belong "the shields of the earth."—[The Review and Herald, March 28, 1907](#). Republished in *Bible Commentary*, Vol. 4 Supplement, p. 1170.

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God Over All

In the annals of human history, the growth of nations, the rise and fall of empires, appear as if dependent on the will and prowess of man; the shaping of events seems, to a great degree, to be determined by his power, ambition, or caprice. But in the word of God the curtain is drawn aside, and we behold, above, behind, and through all the play and counterplay of human interest and power and passions, the agencies of the All-merciful One, silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will.—[Prophets and Kings, 499, 500](#).

The Secret Of National And Individual Prosperity

In His law God has made known the principles that underlie all true prosperity, both of nations and of individuals. To the Israelites Moses declared of this law: "This is your wisdom and your understanding." "It is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life." [Deuteronomy 4:6; 32:47](#). The blessings thus assured to Israel are, on the same conditions and in the same degree, assured to every nation and to every individual under the broad heavens....

In the history of nations the student of God's word may behold the literal fulfillment of divine prophecy. Babylon, shattered and broken at last, passed away because in prosperity its rulers had regarded themselves as independent of God, and had ascribed the glory of their kingdom to human achievement. The Medo-Persian realm was visited by the wrath of Heaven because in it God's law had been trampled underfoot. The fear of the Lord had found no

place in the hearts of the vast majority of the people. Wickedness, blasphemy, and corruption prevailed. The kingdoms that followed were even more base and corrupt; and these sank lower and still lower in the scale of moral worth.

The power exercised by every ruler on the earth is Heaven imparted; and upon his use of the power thus bestowed, his success depends. To each the word of the divine Watcher is, “I girded thee, though thou hast not known me.” [Isaiah 45:5](#). And to each the words spoken to Nebuchadnezzar of old are the lesson of life: “Break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.” [Daniel 4:29](#).

To understand these things,—to understand that “righteousness exalteth a nation;” that “the throne is established by righteousness,” and “upholden by mercy;” ([Proverbs 14:34](#); [16:12](#); [20:28](#)) to recognize the outworking of these principles in the manifestation of His power who “removeth kings, and setteth up kings,” ([Daniel 2:21](#))—this is to understand the philosophy of history.

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In the word of God only is this clearly set forth. Here it is shown that the strength of nations, as of individuals, is not found in the opportunities or facilities that appear to make them invincible; it is not found in their boasted greatness. It is measured by the fidelity with which they fulfill God’s purpose.—[Prophets and Kings, 500-502](#).

Rulers Need To Realize Their Amenability To God’s Law

During the night season I was greatly perplexed. I wished to portray the responsibilities of the rulers of nations and of those who are united with them. The Lord instructed me plainly how to do this. These men are the very ones who need most fully to realize their amenability to God’s law, and to obey all His requirements.

I am instructed to point every one standing in a position of responsibility, to the divine law as the basis of all right conduct.—[Letter 188, 1903](#), p. 3.

Rulers Of Nations Responsible To Be Representatives Of God

The record of the corruption in our cities cannot be traced by human pen. Political strife, bribery, fraud, are seen on every hand. Men seem determined to rule or ruin. They are ready to ill-treat and even to kill those who will not be ruled by them. Who can doubt but that the evils which existed before the flood exist today?...

[20] O that those who are rulers of nations would realize the responsibility resting upon them to be representatives of God, to set a right example, to shun the use of intoxicating liquor, that they may never be found off their guard. Judges, lawyers, senators, should give evidence to those who look to them for guidance that they acknowledge themselves to be under the control of a supreme Ruler, even Christ. They are to heed the invitation, “Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls: for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” No man who ignores his obligations to God has succeeded, or can succeed.—[Letter 246, 1903](#), p. 3.

Rulers Are God’s Servants

One of the most deplorable things upon the earth is the fact that there are passionate governors and unjust judges. They forget that they are under the authority of the great Governor, the all-wise God, and that He is above every ruler, prince, governor, or king. Rulers are God’s servants, and they are to serve their time as His apprentices. It is for their good that they faithfully follow the plain “thus saith the Lord,” keeping the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment. They are to exercise their powers without partiality and without hypocrisy, refusing to be bought or sold, scorning all bribes, and standing in moral independence and dignity before God. They are not to connive at one act of dishonesty or injustice. They are not to do a base, unjust action themselves, nor to sustain others in acts of oppression. Wise rulers will not permit the people to be oppressed because of the envy and jealousy of those who disregard the law of God.—[The Review and Herald, October 1, 1895](#). Republished in [The S.D.A. Bible Commentary 6:1081](#).

No Place For Man’s Theories

[21]

In the commission to His disciples, Christ not only outlined their work, but gave them their message. Teach the people, He said, “to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” The disciples were to teach what Christ had taught. That which He had spoken, not only in person, but through all the prophets and teachers of the Old Testament, is here included. Human teaching is shut out. There is no place for tradition, for man’s theories and conclusions, or for church legislation. No laws ordained by ecclesiastical authority are included in the commission. None of these are Christ’s servants to teach. “The law and the prophets,” with the record of His own words and deeds, are the treasure committed to the disciples to be given to the world. Christ’s name is their watchword, their badge of distinction, their bond of union, the authority for their course of action, and the source of their success. Nothing that does not bear His superscription is to be recognized in His kingdom.—[The Desire of Ages, 826.](#)

Correcting “Heretics” Through Civil Power Is Satan’s Method

The spirit that instigates accusation and condemnation in the church which results in uprooting those that are looked upon as evil-doers, has manifested itself in seeking to correct wrongs through the civil power. This is Satan’s own method for bringing the world under his dominion; but the Lord Jesus Christ has given us no such example for thus dealing with the erring. God has been misrepresented through the church by this very way of dealing with heretics; He has been represented as the one who empowered the church to do these wicked things.

Those who have differed from the established doctrines have been imprisoned, put to torture and to death, because the dignitaries of the church could not endure those who dissented from ideas which these leaders deemed to be true....

[22]

All persecution, all force employed to compel conscience, is after Satan’s own order; and those who carry out these designs are his agents to execute his hellish purpose. In following Satan’s cruel proposals, in becoming his agents, men become the enemies of God

and His church, and will be judged in that great day by that man whom God hath ordained; for He hath committed all judgment into the hands of His Son.—[The Review and Herald, January 10, 1893.](#)

“God Was Preparing The Hearts Of Kings”

(Comment on [Daniel 9:2](#))

While those who had remained loyal to God in the midst of Babylon were seeking the Lord and studying the prophecies foretelling their deliverance, God was preparing the hearts of kings to show favor to His repentant people.—[The Review and Herald, March 21, 1907.](#) Republished in [The S.D.A. Bible Commentary 4:1172.](#)

Angels, Good And Bad, Influence Rulers

[23] [[Daniel 10:12, 13](#) quoted]. By this we see that heavenly agencies have to contend with hindrances before the purpose of God is fulfilled in its time. The king of Persia was controlled by the highest of all evil angels. He refused, as did Pharaoh, to obey the word of the Lord. Gabriel declared, He withstood me twenty-one days by his representations against the Jews. But Michael came to his help, and then he remained with the kings of Persia, holding the powers in check, giving right counsel against evil counsel. Good and evil angels are taking a part in the planning of God in His earthly kingdom. It is God’s purpose to carry forward His work in correct lines, in ways that will advance His glory. But Satan is ever trying to counterwork God’s purpose. Only by humbling themselves before God can God’s servants advance His work. Never are they to depend on their own efforts or on outward display for success.

An Invisible Struggle.—We have before us in the Word of God instances of heavenly agencies working on the minds of kings and rulers, while at the same time satanic agencies were also at work on their minds. No human eloquence, in strongly set forth human opinions, can change the working of satanic agencies. Satan seeks continually to block the way, so that the truth shall be bound about by human devising; and those who have light and knowledge are in the greatest danger unless they constantly consecrate themselves to God, humiliating self, and realizing the peril of the times.

Heavenly beings are appointed to answer the prayers of those who are working unselfishly for the interests of the cause of God. The very highest angels in the heavenly courts are appointed to work out the prayers which ascend to God for the advancement of the cause of God. Each angel has his particular post of duty, which he is not permitted to leave for any other place. If he should leave, the powers of darkness would gain advantage....

Day by day the conflict between good and evil is going on. Why is it that those who have had many opportunities and advantages do not realize the intensity of this work? They should be intelligent in regard to this. God is the Ruler. By His supreme power He holds in check and controls earthly potentates. Through His agencies He does the work which was ordained before the foundation of the world.

[24]

As a people we do not understand as we should the great conflict going on between invisible agencies, the controversy between loyal and disloyal angels. Evil angels are constantly at work, planning their line of attack, controlling as commanders, kings, and rulers, the disloyal human forces.... call upon the ministers of Christ to press home upon the understanding of all who come within the reach of their voice, the truth of the ministration of angels. Do not indulge in fanciful speculations. The written Word is our only safety. We must pray as did Daniel, that we may be guarded by heavenly intelligences. As ministering spirits angels are sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation. Pray, my brethren, pray as you have never prayed before. We are not prepared for the Lord's coming. We need to make thorough work for eternity.—[Letter 201, 1899](#). Published in *Bible Commentary*, Vol. 1, p. 1173.

Angels Speak In Councils

[25]

Though the rulers of this world know it not, yet often in their councils angels have been spokesmen. Human eyes have looked upon them; human ears have listened to their appeals; human lips have opposed their suggestions and ridiculed their counsels; human hands have met them with insult and abuse. In the council hall and the court of justice, these heavenly messengers have shown an intimate acquaintance with human history; they have proved

themselves better able to plead the cause of the oppressed than were their ablest and most eloquent defenders. They have defeated purposes and arrested evils that would have greatly retarded the work of God, and would have caused great suffering to His people. In the hour of peril and distress, “the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.”—[The Great Controversy](#), 632.

II—The Christian's Attitude Toward Civil Authorities

[26]

To be law-abiding, save when human laws conflict
with God's law; not to defy authorities;
God's law supreme, to be regarded above laws of men.

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

by George Fifiield

Christ came to set men free. He said, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me.... to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." [Isaiah 61:1](#). Perfect liberty is found only in Christ. God's law is called the law of liberty. The inspired word calls that law a hedge. It marks out the unchangeable principles of right between man and God, and between man and man, which must be recognized, else liberty is impossible to intelligent beings. All slavery, physical, moral, and intellectual, comes from breaking that law. Liberty is found only in obedience to it. Still there is a sort of slavery in the futile attempt to keep it in our own strength. But Christ, through the new covenant, writes that law in the heart, so that we not only have power to keep it, but his will becomes ours, and with Christ we delight to do His will, because His law is in our hearts. Here is perfect liberty. The perfectly saved will be perfectly free. Throughout eternity they will do just what they please, because they please to do just what makes liberty and joy possible.

Now, as to the relation of the state to the conscience of man. Christ found men enslaved to kings and to priests. He taught that all men are brothers, sons of one Father, and therefore equal before the law,—equal in civil rights. Rulers were, therefore, only their servants, chosen under God to protect them in the enjoyment of their rights. He freed us from the chains of priestcraft, by teaching the

[27] absolute independence of the individual soul in matters religious, and by promising the Spirit of truth to guide each one into all truth.

It is true that all liberty comes through keeping God's law, but God Himself, who wrote that law in the hearts of men in the beginning, who spoke it amid the thunders of Sinai, that all might hear and obey, who waits through the new covenant to rewrite it in every trusting soul,—God Himself, who did all this, still made man as free to disobey these precepts as to obey them. Why did God allow all this fearful iniquity that man might be made free? To this there can be but one answer. It was because He knew the worthlessness of all forced obedience, and that, therefore, the freedom to sin was absolutely necessary to the possibility of righteousness.

After having made men free to sin, that the internal principle of love might work itself out in outward acts of righteousness unhindered by force,—after having made men thus, has God given to any human authority the right to take away that freedom, and so thwart His plans? He has commanded all men to worship Him and obey His precepts, and this command applies to each individual personally; but has He ever commanded any man or set of men to compel others to worship Him, or to act even outwardly as if they worshiped Him? To ask these questions is to answer them emphatically in the negative.

The civil power is the power of arbitrary force to compel men who will not be righteous, to at least be civil, that men may live together in peace and quietness. The true power of the church is the power of divine love manifest in the flesh, to win men to lead righteous lives. The two powers are entirely separate, and Jesus so taught when He said, "Render to Caesar [the civil power] the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

[28] When Peter, as a member of the Christian church, sought to defend the truth by the sword, Jesus, pointing to His Father as the Church's only source of power, said, "Put up again thy sword into its place; for all they that take the sword [i.e., in religious matters] shall perish with the sword." The tares are to be allowed to grow with the wheat until the harvest. Then God will send forth His angels to gather out the tares and burn them. No human effort of arbitrary force can be used in rooting them out, lest in the act the wheat shall be rooted also.

Again Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world, if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight.” Every civil law has the power of the sword back of it. If it is right to make law, then it is right to enforce it. In denying to the church the power of the sword, Jesus therefore forbade the church to ask the state for laws enforcing religious beliefs and observances. Paul understood this when he said, “The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.”

The early church, strong only in the power of God, triumphed grandly, even over the opposing forces of a false religion, upheld by the state. Only when she allied herself with the state, seeking its aid, did she deny her God, lose her power, and darken the world into a night of a thousand years. The present effort of the church to get the state to enforce the observance of Sunday, and to introduce the teaching of Christianity into state schools, is but a revival of the pagan and papal doctrine of force in religious things, and as such it is antichristian.—[The Watchman, May 1, 1906.](#)

“The Things Which Are Caesar’s”

[29]

(See [Matthew 22:21](#))

Holding in His hand the Roman coin, upon which were stamped the name and image of Caesar, He declared that since they were living under the protection of the Roman power, they should render to that power the support it claimed, so long as this did not conflict with a higher duty. But while peaceably subject to the laws of the land, they should at all times give their first allegiance to God.—[The Desire of Ages, 602.](#)

When the Pharisees heard Christ’s answer, “they marveled, and left him, and went their way.” He had rebuked their hypocrisy and presumption, and in doing this He had stated a great principle, a principle that clearly defines the limits of man’s duty to the civil government and his duty to God. In many minds a vexed question had been settled. Ever after they held to the right principle. And although many went away dissatisfied, they saw that the principle underlying the question had been clearly set forth, and they marveled at Christ’s far-seeing discernment.—[The Desire of Ages, 602, 603.](#)

Do More Than The Law Demands

Jesus bade His disciples, instead of resisting the demands of those in authority, to do even more than was required of them. And, so far as possible, they should discharge every obligation, even if it were beyond what the law of the land required. The law, as given through Moses, enjoined a very tender regard for the poor. When a poor man gave his garment as a pledge, or as security for a debt, the creditor was not permitted to enter the dwelling to obtain it; he must wait in the street for the pledge to be brought to him. [30] And whatever the circumstances the pledge must be returned to its owner at nightfall. [Deuteronomy 24:10-13](#). In the days of Christ these merciful provisions were little regarded; but Jesus taught His disciples to submit to the decision of the court, even though this should demand more than the law of Moses authorized. Though it should demand a part of their raiment, they were to yield. More than this, they were to give to the creditor his due, if necessary surrendering even more than the court gave him authority to seize. “If any man would go to law with thee,” He said, “and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.” R.V. And if the couriers require you to go a mile with them, go two miles.—[Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, 72](#).

“Fear God. Honor The King.”

The apostle plainly outlined the attitude that believers should sustain toward the civil authorities: “Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for to praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.”—[The Acts of the Apostles, 522](#).

Recognize Human Government In Its Legitimate Sphere

The banner of truth and religious liberty held aloft by the founders of the gospel church and by God's witnesses during the centuries that have passed since then, has, in this last conflict, been committed to our hands. The responsibility for this great gift rests with those whom God has blessed with a knowledge of His word. We are to receive this word as supreme authority. We are to recognize human government as an ordinance of divine appointment and teach obedience to it as a sacred duty, within its legitimate sphere. But when its claims conflict with the claims of God, we must obey God rather than men. God's word must be recognized as above all human legislation. A "Thus saith the Lord" is not to be set aside for a "Thus saith the church" or a "Thus saith the state." The crown of Christ is to be lifted above the diadems of earthly potentates.

[31]

We are not required to defy authorities. Our words, whether spoken or written, should be carefully considered, lest we place ourselves on record as uttering that which would make us appear antagonistic to law and order. We are not to say or do anything that would unnecessarily close up our way. We are to go forward in Christ's name, advocating the truths committed to us. If we are forbidden by men to do this work, then we may say, as did the apostles, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."—[The Acts of the Apostles, 68, 69.](#)

We Are Not To Attack Authorities

Our work is not to make a raid on the Government but to prepare a people to stand in the great day of the Lord. The fewer attacks we make on authorities and powers, the more work will we do for God....

While the truth must be defended, this work is to be done in the spirit of Jesus. If God's people work without peace and love, they work at a great loss, an irretrievable loss. Souls are driven from Christ even after they have been connected with His work.

[32]

We are not to pass judgment on those who have not had the opportunities and privileges we have had. Some of these will go into heaven before those who have had great light but have not lived up to the light.

If we wish to convince unbelievers that we have the truth that sanctifies the soul and transforms the character, we must not vehemently charge them with their errors. Thus we force them to the conclusion that the truth does not make us kind and courteous, but coarse and rough.

Some, easily excited, are always ready to take up the weapons of warfare. In times of trial they will show that they have not founded their faith on the solid rock....

Let Seventh-day Adventists do nothing that will mark them as lawless and disobedient. Let them keep all inconsistency out of their lives. Our work is to proclaim the truth, leaving the issues with the Lord.

Do all in your power to reflect the light, but do not speak words that will irritate or provoke.—[Manuscript 117a, 1901](#). Printed in [Evangelism, 173](#).

[33]

When Obedience Is Sin

David's power had been given him by God, but to be exercised only in harmony with the divine law. When he commanded that which was contrary to God's law, it became sin to obey. "The powers that be are ordained of God," but we are not to obey them contrary to God's law. The apostle Paul, writing to the Corinthians, sets forth the principle by which we should be governed. He says, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."—[Patriarchs and Prophets, 719](#).

When Men In Authority Are Not To Be Obeyed

"The angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life." We see here that the men in authority are not always to be obeyed, even though they may profess to be teachers of Bible doctrine. There are many today who feel

indignant and aggrieved that any voice should be raised presenting ideas that differ from their own in regard to points of religious belief. Have they not long advocated their ideas as truth? So the priests and rabbis reasoned in apostolic days: What mean these men who are unlearned, some of them mere fishermen, who are presenting ideas contrary to the doctrines which the learned priests and rulers are teaching the people? They have no right to meddle with the fundamental principles of our faith.

But we see that the God of heaven sometimes commissions men to teach that which is regarded as contrary to the established doctrines. Because those who were once the depositaries of truth became unfaithful to their sacred trust, the Lord chose others who would receive the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness, and would advocate truths that were not in accordance with the ideas of the religious leaders. And then these leaders, in the blindness of their minds, give full sway to what is supposed to be righteous indignation against the ones who have set aside cherished fables. They act like men who have lost their reason. They do not consider the possibility that they themselves have not rightly understood the word. They will not open their eyes to discern the fact that they have misinterpreted and misapplied the Scriptures, and have built up false theories, calling them fundamental doctrines of the faith.

But the Holy Spirit will, from time to time, reveal the truth through its own chosen agencies; and no man, not even a priest or ruler, has a right to say, You shall not give publicity to your opinions, because I do not believe them. That wonderful "I" may attempt to put down the Holy Spirit's teaching. Men may for a time attempt to smother it and kill it; but that will not make error truth, or truth error. The inventive minds of men have advanced speculative opinions in various lines, and when the Holy Spirit lets light shine into human minds, it does not respect every point of man's application of the word. God impressed His servants to speak the truth irrespective of what men had taken for granted as truth.—[Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, 69, 70.](#)

[34]

When God's Law And Man's Laws Conflict

The kings and rulers of the earth, however great their power, are to consider themselves under a Ruler who owns the world. No earthly ruler is to be looked upon as above the Ruler who made the world in six days, and rested on the seventh day, sanctifying and blessing it, and giving it to man to be set apart as holy, and observed to the glory of His name. But priests and rulers have set up the first day of the week to be observed by the beings God has made. They compel His creatures to transgress the law of their Creator. Man has set himself above the Lord of heaven, and has turned human beings aside from the observance of the day that God, as their Creator, declared to be kept holy, as a sign between Him and them throughout their generations forever.

[35] We are every one of us to look from finite man to the Omnipotent God, who has the ownership of all to whom He has given life. They are under His government, and when finite rulers make laws that conflict with a plain, "Thus saith the Lord," we are to obey the law of God. Shall man dare to take the place of God, setting aside the laws of the Ruler of the universe, and placing in their stead human enactments? Shall he dare to compel obedience to these human laws...

Christ has a supreme right to present to the world the law that must be obeyed. Those who transgress this law, however high their position in this world, shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven.—[Letter 38, 1906](#).

God's Law Supreme

I saw that it is our duty in every case to obey the laws of our land, unless they conflict with the higher law which God spoke with an audible voice from Sinai, and afterward engraved on stone with His own finger. "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." He who has God's law written in the heart will obey God rather than men, and will sooner disobey all men than deviate in the least from the commandment of God. God's people, taught by the inspiration of truth, and led by a good conscience to live by

every word of God, will take His law, written in their hearts, as the only authority which they can acknowledge or consent to obey. The wisdom and authority of the divine law are supreme.—[Testimonies for the Church 1:361](#).

The ten precepts of Jehovah are the foundation of all righteous and good laws. Those who love God's commandments will conform to every good law of the land. But if the requirements of the rulers are such as conflict with the laws of God, the only question to be settled is: Shall we obey God, or man?—[Testimonies for the Church 1:361, 362](#).

When the laws of earthly rulers are brought into opposition to the laws of the Supreme Ruler of the universe, then those who are God's loyal subjects will be true to Him.—[Testimonies for the Church 5:713](#).

[36]

Edicts Of Kings Void Before God's Commands

On every page of God's word the injunction to obedience is plainly written, and yet how often His commands are lightly regarded or wholly set aside! The command for the observance of the holy Sabbath of the Lord is placed in the very bosom of the decalogue, and is so plain that none need err as to its import, and yet it is treated with as great profanation as were the sacred vessels at the feast of Belshazzar. The condemnation of those who trample upon God's holy Sabbath will not come because they have conscientiously observed the first day of the week, but because they neglected opportunities for searching the Scriptures and learning, not what man has said, not what the ministers say, not what the fathers have said, but what saith the infinite God! What day has God specified as His holy day? What did He command men to honour when He spoke with an audible voice from Sinai? That voice is to be obeyed above every other; the edicts of kings and nations are void before a command of God. The Lord of hosts commands our obedience.—[The Bible Echo, September 17, 1894](#).

What Does God Say?

(See [Acts 5:29](#).)

[37] We are not to inquire, What is the practice of men? or, What is the custom of the world? We are not to ask, How shall I act in order to have the approval of men? or, What will the world tolerate? The question of intense interest to every soul is, What hath God said? We are to read His Word and obey it, not swerving one jot or tittle from its requirements, but acting irrespective of human traditions and jurisdiction.—[The Review and Herald, October 1, 1895](#). Reprinted in *Bible Commentary*, Vol. 6, p. 1056.

In Matters Of Conscience The Majority Has No Power.

The people of God will recognize human government as an ordinance of divine appointment and will teach obedience to it as a sacred duty within its legitimate sphere. But when its claims conflict with the claims of God, the word of God must be recognized as above all human legislation. “Thus saith the Lord” is not to be set aside for Thus saith the church or the state. The crown of Christ is to be uplifted above the diadems of earthly potentates.

The principle we are to uphold at this time is the same that was maintained by the adherents of the gospel in the great Reformation. When the princes assembled at the Diet of Spire in 1529, it seemed that the hope of the world was about to be crushed out. To this assembly was presented the emperor’s decree restricting religious liberty and prohibiting all further dissemination of the reformed doctrines. Would the princes of Germany accept the decree? Should the light of the gospel be shut out from the multitudes that were still in darkness? Mighty issues for the world were at stake. Those who had accepted the reformed faith met together, and the unanimous decision was: “Let us reject the decree. In matters of conscience the majority has no power.”

[38] The banner of truth and religious liberty which these Reformers held aloft has in this last conflict been committed to us. The responsibility for this great gift rests with those whom God has blessed with a knowledge of His word. We are to receive God’s word as supreme authority. We must accept its truths for ourselves. And we can appreciate these truths only as we search them out by personal study. Then, as we make God’s word the guide of our lives, for us is answered the prayer of Christ: “Sanctify them through thy truth:

thy word is truth.” [John 17:17](#). The acknowledgement of the truth in word and deed is our confession of faith. Only thus can others know that we believe the Bible.

Those Reformers whose protest has given us the name Protestant felt that God had called them to give the gospel to the world, and in doing this they were ready to sacrifice their possessions, their liberty, and their lives. Are we in this last conflict of the great controversy as faithful to our trust as were the early Reformers to theirs?

In the face of persecution and death, the truth for that time was spread far and near. The word of God was carried to the people; all classes, high and low, rich and poor, learned and ignorant, studied it eagerly, and those who received the light became in their turn its messengers. In those days the truth was brought home to the people through the press. Luther's pen was a power, and his writings, scattered broadcast, stirred the world. The same agencies are at our command, with facilities multiplied a hundredfold. Bibles, publications in many languages, setting forth the truth for this time, are at our hand and can be swiftly carried to all the world. We are to give the last warning of God to men, and what should be our earnestness in studying the Bible, and our zeal in spreading the light!—[Testimonies for the Church 6:402, 403](#)

We Are Not To Be Presumptuous

[39]

When the authorities come between us and God, we shall receive help if we only trust in Him as did the patriots, prophets, and apostles, and with them we shall be able to say, “Lord, thou art God., which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is.” But while we trust in God, no one should be presumptuous; and that we may not take an unwise course, we should pray constantly. We should not rush into danger unless God sends us there; nor should we call our brethren cowards because they are cautious in their plans that they may not unnecessarily provoke the rulers and powers of the earth. What was the strength of those who in the past have suffered imprisonment and death for Christ's sake?—It was union with God, union with the Holy Spirit, union with Christ....

We read in the Acts of the Apostles that after the miracle at the temple gate, many signs and wonders were wrought, and many were

healed. “Then the high priest rose up, ... and all they that were with him, ... and were filled with indignation.” ...

And then they shut the disciples up in a prison, that the message of God should no longer be given to the people, but the angel of the Lord was there. All heaven was looking upon them than, and the angels are now looking upon those who are living at this closing period of earth’s history. The angel of the Lord came by night to the servants of God and said, “Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.” Here was an order directly contrary to the command given by the potentates of earth. But the direction of the angel was from the highest court in the universe. Did the apostles say to the angel, “We cannot do this until we have consulted the magistrates, and received permission of them”?—No; God had said “Go,” and they went forth to speak according to His commandment.

[40] In the morning their enemies called a council, and sent to the prison that they might be brought before them, but when the officers found them not, they said, “The prison truly found we shut with all safety, ... but when we had opened, we found no man within.” The angel of God could take them through the prison walls, and they had no power to hold them. We have the same God today, and He works on the same plan. When they said the prison was shut, the chief priests doubted the keeper. God was working and the enemy was working, and the battle was waged between the God of heaven and the powers that be. Then the captain sent the officers and had them brought, because they feared the people, and when they were before the council, the high priest asked, “Did not we straitly command you, that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine.” Then the apostles answered, “We ought to obey God rather than men.” We ought to be obedient to all the laws of our country, except when those laws come in collision with the law of God, and then we must obey God, irrespective of everything else.—[The Review and Herald, April 22, 1890.](#)

Our Attitude Toward The Civil Authorities

By some of our brethren many things have been spoken and written that are interpreted as expressing antagonism to government

and law. It is a mistake thus to lay ourselves open to misunderstanding. It is not wise to find fault continually with what is done by the rulers of government. It is not our work to attack individuals or institutions. We should exercise great care lest we be understood as putting ourselves in opposition to the civil authorities. It is true that our warfare is aggressive, but our weapons are to be those found in a plain "Thus saith the Lord." Our work is to prepare a people to stand in the great day of God. We should not be turned aside to lines that will encourage controversy or arouse antagonism in those not of our faith. [41]

We should not work in a manner that will mark us out as seeming to advocate treason. We should weed out from our writings and utterances every expression that, taken by itself, could be so misrepresented as to make it appear antagonistic to law and order. Everything should be carefully considered, lest we place ourselves on record as encouraging disloyalty to our country and its laws. We are not required to defy authorities. There will come a time when, because of our advocacy of Bible truth, we shall be treated as traitors; but let not this time be hastened by unadvised movements that stir up animosity and strife.

The time will come when unguarded expressions of a denunciatory character, that have been carelessly spoken or written by our brethren, will be used by our enemies to condemn us. These will not be used merely to condemn those who made the statements, but will be charged upon the whole body of Adventists. Our accusers will say that on such and such a day one of our responsible men said thus and so against the administration of the laws of this government. Many will be astonished to see how many things have been cherished and remembered that will give point to the arguments of our adversaries. Many will be surprised to hear their own words strained into a meaning that they did not intend them to have. Then let our workers be careful to speak guardedly at all times and under all circumstances. Let all beware lest by reckless expressions they bring on a time of trouble before the great crisis which is to try men's souls.

The less we make direct charges against authorities and powers, the greater work we shall be able to accomplish, both in America and in foreign countries. Foreign nations will follow the example [42]

of the United States. Though she leads out, yet the same crisis will come upon our people in all parts of the world.

It is our work to magnify and exalt the law of God. The truth of God's holy word is to be made manifest. We are to hold up the Scriptures as the rule of life. In all modesty, in the spirit of grace, and in the love of God we are to point men to the fact that the Lord God is the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and that the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord.

In the name of the Lord we are to go forward, unfurling His banner, advocating His word. When the authorities command us not to do this work, when they forbid us to proclaim the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, then it will be necessary for us to say as did the apostles: "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard," [Acts 4:19, 20](#).—[Testimonies for the Church 6:394, 395](#).

Policy For Religious Liberty Journal

[43] What is the *Sentinel* for, but to be the voice of the watchmen on the walls of Zion, to sound the danger signal. We are not to cringe and beg pardon of the world for telling them the truth: we should scorn concealment. Unfurl your colors to meet the case of men and angels. Let it be understood that Seventh-day Adventists can make no compromise. In your opinions and faith there must not be the least appearance of wavering; the world has a right to know what to expect of us, and will look upon us as dishonest, as hiding our real sentiments and principles out of policy, if we carry even the semblance of being uncommitted till the popular voice has pointed out the safe way. The Comforter, the Holy Spirit, which Christ said He would send into the world, was to bear an unwavering testimony.—[Manuscript 16, 1890, Counsels to Writers and Editors, 95](#).

Hold Distinctive Features Front.—The religion of Jesus is endangered. It is being mingled with worldliness. Worldly policy is taking the place of the true piety and wisdom that comes from above, and God will remove His prospering hand from the conference. Shall the ark of the covenant be removed from this people? Shall idols be

smuggled in? Shall false principles and false precepts be brought into the sanctuary? Shall antichrist be respected? Shall the true doctrines and principles given us by God, which have made us what we are, be ignored? Shall God's instrumentality, the publishing house, become a mere political, worldly institution? This is directly where the enemy, through blinded, unconsecrated men, is leading us.

These things have gone as far as they should without someone protesting against them in plain words. The Lord's time to set things in order has fully come. There are men in positions of trust who have not had an experience in the leading out of this work, and these men should walk with humility and caution. In the night season I was present in several councils, and there I heard words repeated by influential men to the effect that if the *American Sentinel* would drop the word Seventh-day Adventist from its columns, and would say nothing about the Sabbath, the great men of the world would patronize it; it would become popular, and do a larger work. This looked very pleasing. These men could not see why we could not affiliate with unbelievers and non professors to make the *American Sentinel* a great success. I saw their countenances brighten, and they began to work on a policy plan to make the *Sentinel* a popular success.

This policy is the first step in a succession of wrong steps. The principles which have been advocated in the *American Sentinel* are the very sum and substance of the advocacy of the Sabbath, and when men begin to talk of changing these principles, they are doing a work which it does not belong to them to do. Like Uzzah, they are attempting to steady the ark, which belongs to God, and is under His special supervision. Said my Guide to those in these councils, "Who of the men among you have felt the burden of the cause from the first, and have accepted responsibilities under trying circumstances? Who has carried the burden of the work during the years of its existence? Who has practiced self-denial and self-sacrifice? The Lord made a place for His stanch servants, whose voices have been heard in warning. He carried forward His work before any of you put your hands to it, and He can and will find a place for the truth you would suppress. In the *American Sentinel* has been published the truth for this time. Take heed what you do. 'Except the Lord build the house,

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they labor in vain that build it.”—[Manuscript 29, 1890](#). Published in [Counsels to Writers and Editors, 95-97](#).

Oath Taking And Human Laws, Good And Bad

[45] I saw that some of God’s children have made a mistake in regard to oath taking, and Satan has taken advantage of this to oppress them, and take from them their Lord’s money. I saw that the words of our Lord, “Swear not at all,” do not touch the judicial oath. “Let your communication be Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.” This refers to common conversation. Some exaggerate in their language. Some swear by their own life; others swear by their head—as sure as they live; as sure as they have a head. Some take heaven and earth to witness that such things are so. Some hope that God will strike them out of existence if what they are saying is not true. It is this kind of common swearing against which Jesus warns His disciples.

We have men placed over us for rulers, and laws to govern the people. Were it not for these laws, the condition of the world would be worse than it is now. Some of these laws are good, others are bad. The bad have been increasing, and we are yet to be brought into strait places. But God will sustain His people in being firm and living up to the principles of His Word. When the laws of men conflict with the word and law of God, we are to obey the latter, whatever the consequences may be. The law of our land requiring us to deliver a slave to his master, we are not to obey; and we must abide the consequences of violating this law. The slave is not the property of any man. God is his rightful master, and man has no right to take God’s workmanship into his hands, and claim him as his own.

I saw that the Lord still has something to do with the laws of the land. While Jesus is in the sanctuary, God’s restraining Spirit is felt by rulers and people. But Satan controls to a great extent the mass of the world, and were it not for the laws of the land, we should experience much suffering. I was shown that when it is actually necessary, and they are called upon to testify in a lawful manner, it is no violation of God’s word for His children to solemnly take God to witness that what they say is the truth, and nothing but the truth.

Man is so corrupt that laws are made to throw the responsibility upon his own head. Some men do not fear to lie to their fellow man; but they have been taught, and the restraining Spirit of God has impressed them, that it is a fearful thing to lie to God. The case of Ananias and Sapphira his wife is given for an example. The matter is carried from man to God, so that if one bears false witness, it is not to man, but to the great God, who reads the heart, and knows the exact truth in every case. Our laws make it a high crime to take a false oath. God has often visited judgment upon the false swearer, and even while the oath was on his lips, the destroying angel has cut him down. This was to prove a terror to evildoers. [46]

I saw that if there is anyone on earth who can consistently testify under oath, it is the Christian. He lives in the light of God's countenance. He grows strong in His strength. And when matters of importance must be decided by law, there is no one who can so well appeal to God as the Christian. I was bidden by the angel to notice that God swears by Himself. [Genesis 22:16](#); [Hebrews 6:13, 17](#). He swore to Abraham ([Genesis 26:3](#)), to Isaac ([Psalm 105:9](#); [Jeremiah 11:5](#)), and to David ([Psalm 132:11](#); [Acts 2:30](#)). God required of the children of Israel an oath between man and man. [Exodus 22:10, 11](#). Jesus submitted to the oath in the hour of His trial. The high priest said unto Him: "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God." Jesus said unto him: "Thou hast said." If Jesus in His teachings to His disciples referred to the judicial oath, He would have reproved the high priest, and there enforced His teachings, for the good of His followers present. Satan has been pleased that some have viewed oath taking in a wrong light; for it has given him the opportunity to oppress them and take from them their Lord's money. The stewards of God must be more wise, lay their plans, and prepare themselves to withstand Satan's devices; for he is to make greater efforts than ever before.

Some, I saw, have a prejudice against our rulers and laws; but if it were not for law, this world would be in an awful condition. God restrains our rulers; for the hearts of all are in His hands. Bounds are set, beyond which they cannot go. Many of the rulers are those whom Satan controls; but I saw that God has His agents, even among the rulers. And some of them will yet be converted to the truth. They are now acting the part that God would have them. When Satan [47]

works through his agents, propositions are made, that, if carried out, would impede the work of God and produce great evil. The good angels move upon these agents of God to oppose such propositions with strong reasons, which Satan's agents cannot resist. A few of God's agents will have power to bear down a great mass of evil. Thus the work will go on until the third message has done its work, and at the loud cry of the third angel, these agents will have an opportunity to receive the truth, and some of them will be converted, and endure with the saints through the time of trouble. When Jesus leaves the most holy, His restraining Spirit is withdrawn from rulers and people. They are left to the control of evil angels. Then such laws will be made by the counsel and direction of Satan, that unless time should be very short, no flesh could be saved.—[Testimonies for the Church 1:201-204](#).

Individual Rights To Be Regarded

But God never compels men to obey Him. Together truth and error take the field. The light shines forth amid moral darkness, and men are left to choose their own leader.

[48] After the king of Babylon had witnessed the wonderful deliverance wrought by God for His faithful servants, and had seen the men walk unhurt from the fire, he published a decree that any one speaking a word against the God of Heaven, who had so wonderfully saved His servants, should be cut in pieces, "because," he declared, "there is no other god that can deliver after this sort." Thus, through the deceiving power of the enemy, God's truth is misinterpreted and misapplied, and His way confused by human inventions.

The king had a right to worship the God of Heaven, and to do all in his power to exalt Him above other gods; but he had no right to use his authority in compelling his subjects to change from the worship of idols to the worship of the true God. He had no more right to threaten men with death for not worshiping the true God than he had to make the decree consigning to the flames all who refused to worship the golden image.

Today, as in the days of Babylon, the accuser of the brethren is working through human agencies to hurt and destroy those who are dear to the Lord. Men in power do not realize that they can not

in justice control the minds of their fellow men, and Satan works through them to corrupt right dealing. Those who try to keep the commandments of God, will meet with much opposition. Satanic attributes will take possession of the hearts of men, making them as hard as steel; and all who depart from evil will make themselves a prey to the hatred of those that refuse to obey the law of God.

But when the State forms laws directly opposed to the laws of Jehovah, and thus strives to compel men to obey them, it is following the example set by the king of Babylon. When it takes the guardianship of the religious interests of the nation, a spirit of intolerance is manifested if men seek to practise the truth which, by earnest study, they have found in God's Word. Those who are actuated by such a spirit of oppression can not understand what religious liberty means.

Every man has a right to worship God according to his own convictions; no one is called upon to obey laws that are opposed to the laws of God; and the only position the State can take, and have the approval of God, is to guard the rights of every individual, permitting no oppression to come upon any one because of religious belief.

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As Nebuchadnezzar tried to force his subjects to obey his mandates, so men will try to force us to disregard the Word of God. They will endeavor to compel us to render homage to man-made statutes; but in God's strength we are to refuse to dishonor Him. The laws of earthly kingdoms are to be obeyed only when they do not conflict with the laws of God. When governments are tyrannical and overbearing, when they trample on God's law, their laws are contemptible in His sight. And when they try to control the minds and consciences of those whom Christ died to make free, God's children are to show their loyalty to Him by refusing to disobey His commandments.

When the judgment shall sit, and the books of heaven shall be opened, all will be judged, not by the laws that human minds have enacted, but by the law of God, which existed before the foundations of the world were laid. And the men who have been coworkers with the first great rebel, and who have not, as guardians of the State, searched the Word of God, that as rulers they might deal righteously

and mercifully, will be judged by the law they have disregarded and dishonored....

They have shown no respect for God, no fear to transgress His commandments; but have refused to give their fellow men rights equal to their own, and have tried to make them disobey God. They have stubbornly adhered to man-made commandments, and they will be judged accordingly. Those who persist in enacting laws which men can not obey without dishonoring God, and those that obey these laws, and trample on the law of the eternal God, must prepare for the result; for God will not change, nor alter the thing which has gone out of His mouth.—[The Signs of the Times, February 27, 1912.](#)

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Religious Liberty Question Very Important

The question of religious liberty is very important, and it should be handled with great wisdom and discretion. Unless this is done, there is danger that by our own course of action we shall bring upon ourselves a crisis before we are prepared for it. The burden of our message should be “the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.” Our brethren should be cautioned to make moves that will not stir up and provoke the powers that be, so that they will make moves that will limit the work, and cut us off from proclaiming the message in different localities.

We need more of the working of the Infinite, and far less trust in human agencies. We are to prepare a people to stand in the day of God’s preparation, we are to call men’s attention to the cross of Calvary, to make clear the reason why Christ made His great sacrifice. We are to show men that it is possible for them to come back to their allegiance to God and to their obedience to His commandments. When the sinner looks upon Christ as the propitiation for his sins, let men step aside. Let them declare to the sinner that Christ “is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” Encourage him to seek wisdom from God; for through earnest prayer he will learn the way of the Lord more perfectly than if instructed by some human counselor. He will see that it was the transgression of the law that caused the death of the Son of the infinite God, and he

will hate the sins that wounded Jesus. As he looks upon Christ as a compassionate, tender High Priest, his heart will be preserved in contrition.—[Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, 219, 220.](#)

[51] **III—Heroes Of Faith—The World’s True Noblemen**

Men who stood firm in Bible times and later

Abraham’s example of cooperation and noble independence

Elijah

Three Hebrews

Daniel

Ezra and Nehemiah

Esther

Peter and John

Stephen

Paul and Barnabas, Paul and Silas

Reformers

“The Bible heroes of faith are to be our examples.”—MS 6, 1889

[52] **God Is Witnesses In All Ages**

How often those who trusted the Word of God, though in themselves utterly helpless, have withstood the power of the whole world,—Enoch, pure in heart, holy in life, holding fast his faith in the triumph of righteousness, against a corrupt and scoffing generation; Noah and his household against the men of his time, men of the greatest physical and mental strength and the most debased in morals; the children of Israel at the Red Sea, a helpless, terrified multitude of slaves, against the mightiest army of the mightiest nation on the globe; David, a shepherd lad, having God’s promise of the throne, against Saul, the established monarch, bent on holding fast his power; Shadrach and his companions in the fire, against Nebuchadnezzar on the throne; Daniel among the lions, against his enemies in the high places of the kingdom; Jesus on the cross, against the Jewish priests and rulers forcing even the Roman governor to work their will; Paul in chains, led to a criminal’s death, against Nero, the despot of the world’s empire.

Such examples are not found in the Bible alone. They abound in every record of human progress. The Vaudois and the Huguenots, Wyclif and Huss, Jerome and Luther, Tyndale and Knox, Zinzendorf and Wesley, with multitudes of others, have witnessed to the power of God's Word against human power and policy in support of evil. These are the world's true noblemen. They are its royal line.—[The Review and Herald, December 24, 1908.](#)

Bible Examples Of Steadfastness Under Persecution

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In all ages God's appointed witnesses have exposed themselves to reproach and persecution for the truth's sake. Joseph was maligned and persecuted because he preserved his virtue and integrity. David, the chosen messenger of God, was hunted like a beast of prey by his enemies. Daniel was cast into a den of lions because he was true to his allegiance to heaven. Job was deprived of his worldly possessions, and so afflicted in body that he was abhorred by his relatives and friends; yet he maintained his integrity. Jeremiah could not be deterred from speaking the words that God had given him to speak; and his testimony so enraged the king and princes that he was cast into a loathsome pit, Stephen was stoned because he preached Christ and Him crucified. Paul was imprisoned, beaten with rods, stoned, and finally put to death because he was a faithful messenger for God to the Gentiles. And John was banished to the isle of Patmos "for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."—[The Acts of the Apostles, 575.](#)

Abraham's Noble Example

(See [Genesis 14:12-14.](#))

To Abraham, under God, the triumph was due. The worshiper of Jehovah had not only rendered a great service to the country, but had proved himself a man of valor. It was seen that righteousness is not cowardice, and that Abraham's religion made him courageous in maintaining the right and defending the oppressed. His heroic act gave him a widespread influence among the surrounding tribes. On his return, the king of Sodom came out with his retinue to honor the conqueror. He bade him take the goods, begging only

[54] that the prisoners should be restored. By the usage of war, the spoils belonged to the conquerors; but Abraham had undertaken this expedition with no purpose of gain, and he refused to take advantage of the unfortunate, only stipulating that his confederates should receive the portion to which they were entitled.

Few, if subjected to such a test, would have shown themselves as noble as did Abraham. Few would have resisted the temptation to secure so rich a booty. His example is a rebuke to selfseeking, mercenary spirits. Abraham regarded the claims of justice and humanity. His conduct illustrates the inspired maxim, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” “I have lifted up mine hand,” he said, “unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread even to a shoe latchet, and that I will not take anything that is thine, lest thou shouldst say, I have made Abram rich.” He would give them no occasion to think that he had engaged in warfare for the sake of gain, or to attribute his prosperity to their gifts or favor. God had promised to bless Abraham, and to Him the glory should be ascribed.—[Patriarchs and Prophets, 135, 136.](#)

Joseph’s Fidelity Brought Special Favors To God’s People

The people of Egypt, in order to supply themselves with food during the famine, had sold to the crown their cattle and lands, and had finally bound themselves to perpetual serfdom. Joseph wisely provided for their release; he permitted them to become royal tenants, holding their lands of the king, and paying an annual tribute of one-fifth of the products of their labor.

[55] But the children of Jacob were not under the necessity of making such conditions. On account of the service that Joseph had rendered the Egyptian nation, they were not only granted a part of the country as a home, but were exempted from taxation, and liberally supplied with food during the continuance of the famine. The king publicly acknowledged that it was through the merciful interposition of the God of Joseph that Egypt enjoyed plenty while other nations were perishing from famine. He saw, too, that Joseph’s management had greatly enriched the kingdom, and his gratitude surrounded the family of Jacob with royal favor.—[Patriarchs and Prophets, 241.](#)

Exempted From Taxes

No tax was required of Joseph's father and brethren by the king of Egypt, and Joseph was allowed the privilege of supplying them liberally with food. The king said to his rulers, Are we not indebted to the God of Joseph, and to him, for this liberal supply of food? Was it not because of his wisdom that we laid in so abundantly? While other lands are perishing, we have enough! His management has greatly enriched the kingdom.—[The Story of Redemption, 104.](#)

Elijah, God's Fearless Messenger To King Ahab

To Elijah was entrusted the mission of delivering to Ahab Heaven's message of judgment. He did not seek to be the Lord's messenger; the word of the Lord came to him. And jealous for the honor of God's cause, he did not hesitate to obey the divine summons, though to obey seemed to invite swift destruction at the hand of the wicked king. The prophet set out at once, and traveled night and day until he reached Samaria. At the palace he solicited no admission, nor waited to be formally announced. Clad in the coarse garments usually worn by the prophets of that time, he passed the guards, apparently unnoticed, and stood for a moment before the astonished king. [56]

Elijah made no apology for his abrupt appearance. A Greater than the ruler of Israel had commissioned him to speak; and, lifting his hand toward heaven, he solemnly affirmed by the living God that the judgments of the Most High were about to fall upon Israel. "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand," he declared, "there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word."

It was only by the exercise of strong faith in the unfailing power of God's word that Elijah delivered his message. Had he not possessed implicit confidence in the One whom he served, he would never have appeared before Ahab.—[Prophets and Kings, 120, 121.](#)

Ahab Powerless Before God's Messenger

God was now visiting His people with the severest of His judgments. The prediction of Elijah was meeting with terrible fulfillment.

For three years the messenger of woe was sought for in city after city and nation after nation. At the mandate of Ahab, many rulers had given their oath of honor that the strange prophet could not be found in their dominions. Yet the search was continued; for Jezebel and the prophets of Baal hated Elijah with a deadly hatred, and they spared no effort to bring him within reach of their power. And still there was no rain.

At last, “after many days,” the word of the Lord came to Elijah, “Go, show thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth.”

In obedience to the command, “Elijah went to show himself unto Ahab.” ...

“As Obadiah was in the way, behold, Elijah met him: and he knew him, and fell on his face, and said, Art thou that my lord Elijah?”

[57] During the apostasy of Israel, Obadiah had remained faithful. His master, the king, had been unable to turn him from his allegiance to the living God. Now he was honored with a commission from Elijah, who said, “Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here.” ...

In astonishment mingled with terror the king listened to the message from the man whom he feared and hated, and for whom he had sought so untiringly. Well he knew that Elijah would not endanger his life merely for the sake of meeting him. Could it be possible that the prophet was about to utter another woe against Israel? The king’s heart was seized with dread. He remembered the withered arm of Jeroboam. Ahab could not avoid obeying the summons, neither dared he lift up his hand against the messenger of God. And so, accompanied by a bodyguard of soldiers, the trembling monarch went to meet the prophet.

The king and the prophet stand face to face. Though Ahab is filled with passionate hatred, yet in the presence of Elijah he seems unmanned, powerless. In his first faltering words, “Art thou he that troubleth Israel?” he unconsciously reveals the inmost feelings of his heart. Ahab knew that it was by the word of God that the heavens had become as brass, yet he sought to cast upon the prophet the blame for the heavy judgments resting on the land.

It is natural for the wrong-doer to hold the messengers of God responsible for the calamities that come as the sure result of a departure from the way of righteousness. Those who place themselves

in Satan's power are unable to see things as God sees them. When the mirror of truth is held up before them, they become indignant at the thought of receiving reproof. Blinded by sin, they refuse to repent; they feel that God's servants have turned against them, and are worthy of severest censure.

Standing in conscious innocence before Ahab, Elijah makes no attempt to excuse himself or to flatter the king. Nor does he seek to evade the king's wrath by the good news that the drought is almost over. He has no apology to offer. Indignant, and jealous for the honor of God, he casts back the imputation of Ahab, fearlessly declaring to the king that it is his sins, and the sins of his fathers, that have brought upon Israel this terrible calamity. "I have not troubled Israel," Elijah boldly asserts, "but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim."

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Today there is need of the voice of stern rebuke; for grievous sins have separated the people from God. Infidelity is fast becoming fashionable. "We will not have this man to reign over us," is the language of thousands. The smooth sermons so often preached make no lasting impression; the trumpet does not give a certain sound. Men are not cut to the heart by the plain, sharp truths of God's word.—[Prophets and Kings, 137-140.](#)

Elijah Unashamed And Unterrified Before His Enemies

Facing King Ahab and the false prophets, and surrounded by the assembled hosts of Israel, Elijah stands, the only one who has appeared to vindicate the honor of Jehovah. He whom the whole kingdom has charged with its weight of woe, is now before them, apparently defenseless in the presence of the monarch of Israel, the prophets of Baal, the men of war, and the surrounding thousands. But Elijah is not alone. Above and around him are the protecting hosts of heaven,—angels that excel in strength.

Unashamed, unterrified, the prophet stands before the multitude, fully aware of his commission to execute the divine command. His countenance is lighted with an awful solemnity. In anxious expectancy the people wait for him to speak. Looking first upon the broken-down altar of Jehovah, and then upon the multitude, Elijah

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cries out in clear, trumpet-like tones: “How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him.”—[Prophets and Kings](#), 147.

Three Faithful Youth And A Proud King’s Degree

(See [Daniel 3](#).)

Not all had bowed the knee to the idolatrous symbol of human power. In the midst of the worshiping multitude there were three men who were firmly resolved not thus to dishonor the God of heaven. Their God was King of kings and Lord of lords; they would bow to none other.

To Nebuchadnezzar, flushed with triumph, was brought the word that among his subjects there were some who dared disobey his mandate. Certain of the wise men, jealous of the honors that had been bestowed upon the faithful companions of Daniel, now reported to the king their flagrant violation of his wishes....

But firmly the Hebrews testified to their allegiance to the God of heaven, and their faith in His power to deliver. The act of bowing to the image was understood by all to be an act of worship. Such homage they could render to God alone.

As the three Hebrews stood before the king, he was convinced that they possessed something the other wise men of his kingdom did not have. They had been faithful in the performance of every duty. He would give them another trial. If only they would signify their willingness to unite with the multitude in worshiping the image, all would be well with them; “but if ye worship not,” he added, “ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.” Then with his hand stretched upward in defiance, he demanded, “Who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?”

[60] In vain were the king’s threats. He could not turn the men from their allegiance to the Ruler of the universe. From the history of their fathers they had learned that disobedience to God results in dishonor, disaster, and death; and that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, the foundation of all true prosperity. Calmly facing the furnace, they said: “O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so [if this is your decision], our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he

will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.” Their faith strengthened as they declared that God would be glorified by delivering them, and with triumphant assurance born of implicit trust in God, they added, “But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.”

The king’s wrath knew no bounds. “Full of fury,” “the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego,” representatives of a despised and captive race. Directing that the furnace be heated seven times hotter than its wont, he commanded the mighty men of his army to bind the worshipers of Israel’s God, preparatory to summary execution....

By the deliverance of His faithful servants, the Lord declared that He takes His stand with the oppressed, and rebukes all earthly powers that rebel against the authority of Heaven. The three Hebrews declared to the whole nation of Babylon their faith in Him whom they worshiped. They relied on God. In the hour of their trial they remembered the promise, “When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.” And in a marvelous manner their faith in the living Word had been honored in the sight of all. The tidings of their wonderful deliverance were carried to many countries by the representatives of the different nations that had been invited by Nebuchadnezzar to the dedication. Through the faithfulness of His children, God was glorified in all the earth.

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Important are the lessons to be learned from the experience of the Hebrew youth on the plain of Dura. In this our day, many of God’s servants, though innocent of wrong-doing, will be given over to suffer humiliation and abuse at the hands of those who, inspired by Satan, are filled with envy and religious bigotry. Especially will the wrath of man be aroused against those who hallow the Sabbath of the fourth commandment; and at last a universal decree will denounce these as deserving of death.

The season of distress before God’s people will call for a faith that will not falter. His children must make it manifest that He is the only object of their worship, and that no consideration, not even that of life itself, can induce them to make the least concession to false worship. To the loyal heart the commands of sinful, finite men will

sink into insignificance beside the word of the eternal God. Truth will be obeyed though the result be imprisonment or exile or death.

[62] As in the days of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, so in the closing period of earth's history the Lord will work mightily in behalf of those who stand steadfastly for the right. He who walked with the Hebrew worthies in the fiery furnace will be with His followers wherever they are. His abiding presence will comfort and sustain. In the midst of the time of trouble,—trouble such as has not been since there was a nation,—His chosen ones will stand unmoved. Satan with all the hosts of evil cannot destroy the weakest of God's saints. Angels that excel in strength will protect them, and in their behalf Jehovah will reveal Himself as a "God of gods," able to save to the uttermost those who have put their trust in Him.—[Prophets and Kings, 506-513](#).

Three Loyal Youth

In vain were the king's threats. He could not turn these noble men from their allegiance to the great Ruler of nations. They had learned from the history of their fathers that disobedience to God is dishonor, disaster, and ruin; that the fear of the Lord is not only the beginning of wisdom but the foundation of all true prosperity. They look with calmness upon the fiery furnace and the idolatrous thron. They have trusted in God, and He will not fail them now. Their answer is respectful, but decided: "Be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." ([Daniel 3:18](#)).

The proud monarch is surrounded by his great men, the officers of the government, and the army that has conquered nations; and all unite in applauding him as having the wisdom and power of the gods. In the midst of this imposing display stand the three youthful Hebrews, steadily persisting in their refusal to obey the king's decree. They had been obedient to the laws of Babylon so far as these did not conflict with the claims of God, but they would not be swayed a hair's breadth from the duty they owed to their Creator.

The king's wrath knew no limits. In the very height of his power and glory, to be thus defied by the representatives of a despised and captive race was an insult which his proud spirit could not endure.

The fiery furnace had been heated seven times more than it was wont, and into it were cast the Hebrew exiles. So furious were the flames, that the men who cast them in were burned to death....

By the deliverance of His faithful servants, the Lord declares that He will take His stand with the oppressed and overthrow all earthly powers that would trample upon the authority of the God of heaven.—[The Sanctified Life, 37, 38, 40.](#)

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Angels of the Lord were watching by the side of the faithful three. God wished to show to the nations of the world who was the great I AM, the God of the heavens, the Ruler of the universe, who alone was to be worshiped. Did not the Hebrews break the law of the king?—Yes, but the law of God was first to be obeyed.—[The Review and Herald, April 29, 1890.](#)

Daniel, Example Of Christian Fearlessness And Fidelity

The prophet's enemies counted on Daniel's firm adherence to principle for the success of their plan. And they were not mistaken in their estimate of his character. He quickly read their malignant purpose in framing the decree, but he did not change his course in a single particular. Why should he cease to pray now, when he most needed to pray? Rather would he relinquish life itself, than his hope of help in God. With calmness he performed his duties as chief of the princes; and at the hour of prayer he went to his chamber, and with his windows open toward Jerusalem, in accordance with his usual custom, he offered his petition to the God of heaven. He did not try to conceal his act. Although he knew full well the consequences of his fidelity to God, his spirit faltered not. Before those who were plotting his ruin, he would not allow it even to appear that his connection with Heaven was severed. In all cases where the king had a right to command, Daniel would obey; but neither the king nor his decree could make him swerve from allegiance to the King of kings.

Thus the prophet boldly yet quietly and humbly declared that no earthly power has a right to interpose between the soul and God. Surrounded by idolaters, he was a faithful witness to this truth. His dauntless adherence to right was a bright light in the moral darkness

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of that heathen court. Daniel stands before the world today a worthy example of Christian fearlessness and fidelity....

God did not prevent Daniel's enemies from casting him into the lions' den; He permitted evil angels and wicked men thus far to accomplish their purpose; but it was that He might make the deliverance of His servant more marked, and the defeat of the enemies of truth and righteousness more complete. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee," the psalmist has testified. Through the courage of this one man who chose to follow right rather than policy, Satan was to be defeated, and the name of God was to be exalted and honored.—[Prophets and Kings, 540-544.](#)

Lessons From Daniel's Deliverance

From the story of Daniel's deliverance, we may learn that in seasons of trial and gloom, God's children should be just what they were when their prospects were bright with hope and their surroundings all that they could desire. Daniel in the lions' den was the same Daniel who stood before the king as chief among the ministers of state and as a prophet of the Most High. A man whose heart is stayed upon God will be the same in the hour of his greatest trial as he is in prosperity, when the light and favor of God and of man beam upon him. Faith reaches to the unseen, and grasps eternal realities.

[65] Heaven is very near those who suffer for righteousness' sake. Christ identifies His interests with the interests of His faithful people; He suffers in the person of His saints; and whoever touches His chosen ones touches Him. The power that is near to deliver from physical harm or distress is also near to save from the greater evil, making it possible for the servant of God to maintain his integrity under all circumstances, and to triumph through divine grace.—[Prophets and Kings, 545.](#)

Daniel Honored By Man And By God

The experience of Daniel as a statesman in the kingdoms of Babylon and Medo-Persia reveals the truth that a business man is not necessarily a designing, policy man, but that he may be a man

instructed by God at every step. Daniel, the prime minister of the greatest of earthly kingdoms, was at the same time a prophet of God, receiving the light of heavenly inspiration. A man of like passions as ourselves, the pen of inspiration describes him as without fault. His business transactions, when subjected to the closest scrutiny of his enemies, were found to be without one flaw. He was an example of what every business man may become when his heart is converted and consecrated, and when his motives are right in the sight of God.

Strict compliance with the requirements of Heaven brings temporal as well as spiritual blessings. Unwavering in his allegiance to God, unyielding in his mastery of self, Daniel, by his noble dignity and unswerving integrity, while yet a young man, won the “favor and tender love” of the heathen officer in whose charge he had been placed. The same characteristics marked his after life. He rose speedily to the position of prime minister of the kingdom of Babylon. Through the reign of successive monarchs, the downfall of the nation, and the establishment of another world empire, such were his wisdom and statesmanship, so perfect his tact, his courtesy, his genuine goodness of heart, his fidelity to principle, that even his enemies were forced to the confession that “they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful.”

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Honored by men with the responsibilities of state and with the secrets of kingdoms bearing universal sway, Daniel was honored by God as His ambassador, and was given many revelations of the mysteries of ages to come.—[Prophets and Kings, 546, 547.](#)

Daniel A Faithful Statesman

Daniel was a faithful statesman in the courts of Babylon; for he feared, loved, and trusted God; and in time of temptation and peril he was preserved by the power of God. We read that God gave Daniel wisdom, and endowed him with understanding.—[Fundamentals of Christian Education, 205.](#)

Daniel An Example Of Firmness For Right

Daniel possessed the grace of genuine meekness. He was true, firm, and noble. He sought to live in peace with all, while he was

unbending as the lofty cedar wherever principle was involved. In everything that did not come in collision with his allegiance to God, he was respectful and obedient to those who had authority over him; but he had so high a sense of the claims of God that the requirements of earthly rulers were held subordinate. He would not be induced by any selfish consideration to swerve from his duty....

Daniel might have found a plausible excuse to depart from his strictly temperate habits; but the approval of God was dearer to him than the favor of the most powerful earthly potentate—dearer even than life itself.—[Fundamentals of Christian Education, 78, 79.](#)

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Daniel's Critical Position

Daniel in Babylon was placed in a most critical and trying position, but while he did the work assigned to him as a statesman, he plainly refused to handle any work that would militate against God. This course provoked discussion, and thus the Lord, through His providence, which is always at work in human affairs, brought Daniel into reasoning relation with the king of Babylon. God had light for Nebuchadnezzar, and through Daniel was presented to the king things foretold in the prophecies against Babylon and other Kingdoms.—[Manuscript 147a, 1898.](#)

Daniel's position was not an enviable one. He stood at the head of a dishonest, prevaricating, godless cabinet, whose members watched him with keen, jealous eyes, to find some flaw in his conduct. They kept spies on his track, to see if they could not in this way find something against him. Satan suggested to these men a plan whereby they might get rid of Daniel. Use his religion as a means of condemning him, the enemy said.—[The Youth's Instructor, November 1, 1900.](#) Republished in [The S.D.A. Bible Commentary 4:1171.](#)

Daniel's Fidelity

The honors bestowed upon Daniel excited the jealousy of the leading men of the kingdom. The presidents and princes sought to find occasion for complaint against him. "But they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him" ([verse 4](#)).

What a lesson is here presented for all Christians. The keen eyes of jealousy were fixed upon Daniel day after day; their watchings were sharpened by hatred; yet not a word or act of his life could they make appear wrong.... [68]

A scheme was now devised to accomplish his destruction. His enemies assembled at the palace and besought the king to pass a decree that no person in the whole realm should ask anything of either God or man, except of Darius the king, for the space of thirty days, and that any violation of this edict should be punished by casting the offender into the den of lions....

The decree goes forth from the king. Daniel is acquainted with the purpose of his enemies to ruin him. But he does not change his course in a single particular. With calmness he performs his accustomed duties, and at the hour of prayer he goes to his chamber, and with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he offers his petitions to the God of heaven. By his course of action he fearlessly declares that no earthly power has the right to come between him and his God and tell him to whom he should or should not pray. Noble man of principle! He stands before the world today a praiseworthy example of Christian boldness and fidelity. He turns to God with all his heart, although he knows that death is the penalty for his devotion.—[The Sanctified Life, 42-44.](#)

A Decree Disregarded

Daniel heard of what had been done, but he made no protest. He could see the design of his enemies. He knew that they would watch closely his going out and his coming in, but he calmly attended to his duties, and at the hour of prayer he went to his chamber, and kneeling by the open window, with his face toward Jerusalem, he prayed to his God. From his youth he had been taught that in prayer his face should be turned toward the temple, where by faith he saw the revelation of Jehovah's glory. [69]

Daniel prayed more fervently than was his wont, that He who understands the secret working of Satan and his agents would not leave his servant, but would care for him. He prayed for strength to endure the trial.

Some may ask, Why did not Daniel lift his soul to God in secret prayer? Would not the Lord, knowing the situation, have excused His servant from kneeling openly before Him? Or why did he not kneel before God in some secret place, where his enemies could not see him?

Daniel knew that the God of Israel must be honored before the Babylonian nation. He knew that neither kings nor nobles had any right to come between him and his duty to his God. He must bravely maintain his religious principles before all men; for he was God's witness. Therefore he prayed as was his wont, as if no decree had been made.—[The Youth's Instructor, November 1, 1900.](#)

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Daniel's Constant Recognition Of God

In Daniel's life, the desire to glorify God was the most powerful of all motives. He realized that when standing in the presence of men of influence, a failure to acknowledge God as the source of his wisdom would have made him an unfaithful steward. And his constant recognition of the God of heaven before kings, princes, and statesmen, detracted not one iota from his influence. King Nebuchadnezzar, before whom Daniel so often honored the name of God, was finally thoroughly converted, and learned to "praise and extol and honor the King of heaven" ([The Review and Herald, January 11, 1906](#)). Republished in [The S.D.A. Bible Commentary 4:1170](#).

God The Ruler Over All

Through the Hebrew captives the Lord was made known to the heathen in Babylon. This idolatrous nation was given a knowledge of the kingdom the Lord was to establish, and through His power maintain against all the power and craft of Satan. Daniel and his fellow companions, Ezra and Nehemiah, and many others were witnesses for God in their captivity. The Lord scattered them among the kingdoms of the earth that their light might shine brightly amid the black darkness of heathenism and idolatry. To Daniel God revealed the light of His purposes, which had been hidden for many generations. He chose that Daniel should see in vision the light of

His truth, and reflect this light on the proud kingdom of Babylon. On the despot king was permitted to flash light from the throne of God. Nebuchadnezzar was shown that the God of heaven was ruler over all the monarchs and kings of earth. His name was to go forth as the God over all gods. God desired Nebuchadnezzar to understand that the rulers of earthly kingdoms had a ruler in the heavens. God's faithfulness in rescuing the three captives from the flames and vindicating their course of action showed his wonderful power.

Great light shone forth from Daniel and his companions. Glorious things were spoken of Zion, the city of the Lord. Thus the Lord designs that spiritual light shall shine from His faithful watchmen in these last days. If the saints in the Old Testament bore such a decided testimony of loyalty, how should God's people today, having the accumulated light of centuries, shine forth, when the prophecies of the Old Testament shed their veiled glory into the future! [Letter 32, 1899](#). Published in [The S.D.A. Bible Commentary 4:1169](#).

For Such A Time As This

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Through Haman the Agagite, an unscrupulous man high in authority in Medo-Persia, Satan worked at this time to counterwork the purposes of God. Haman cherished bitter malice against Mordecai, a Jew. Mordecai had done Haman no harm, but had simply refused to show him worshipful reverence. Scorning to "lay hands on Mordecai alone," Haman plotted "to destroy all the Jews that were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus, even the people of Mordecai."

Misled by the false statements of Haman, Xerxes was induced to issue a decree providing for the massacre of all the Jews "scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces" of the Medo-Persian kingdom. A certain day was appointed on which the Jews were to be destroyed and their property confiscated. Little did the king realize the far-reaching results that would have accompanied the complete carrying out of this decree. Satan himself, the hidden instigator of the scheme, was trying to rid the earth of those who preserved the knowledge of the true God....

But the plots of the enemy were defeated by a Power that reigns among the children of men. In the providence of God, Esther, a Jewess who feared the Most High, had been made queen of the

Medo-Persian kingdom. Mordecai was a near relative of hers. In their extremity, they decided to appeal to Xerxes in behalf of their people. Esther was to venture into his presence as an intercessor. “Who knoweth,” said Mordecai, “whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”

[72] The crisis that Esther faced demanded quick, earnest action; but both she and Mordecai realized that unless God should work mightily in their behalf, their own efforts would be unavailing. So Esther took time for communion with God, the source of her strength. “Go,” she directed Mordecai, “gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.”—[Prophets and Kings, 600, 601](#).

The Death Decree In Our Day

The trying experiences that came to God’s people in the days of Esther were not peculiar to that age alone. The revelator, looking down the ages to the close of time, has declared, “The dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Some who today are living on the earth will see these words fulfilled. The same spirit that in ages past led men to persecute the true church, will in the future lead to the pursuance of a similar course toward those who maintain their loyalty to God. Even now preparations are being made for this last great conflict.

The decree that will finally go forth against the remnant people of God will be very similar to that issued by Ahasuerus against the Jews. Today the enemies of the true church see in the little company keeping the Sabbath commandment, a Mordecai at the gate. The reverence of God’s people for His law, is a constant rebuke to those who have cast off the fear of the Lord, and are trampling on His Sabbath.

Satan will arouse indignation against the minority who refuse to accept popular customs and traditions. Men of position and reputation will join with the lawless and the vile to take counsel against the people of God. Wealth, genius, education, will combine

to cover them with contempt. Persecuting rulers, ministers, the church members will conspire against them. With voice and pen, by boasts, threats, and ridicule, they will seek to overthrow their faith. By false representations and angry appeals, men will stir up the passions of the people. Not having a “Thus saith the Scriptures” to bring against the advocates of the Bible Sabbath, they will resort to oppressive enactments to supply the lack. To secure popularity and patronage, legislators will yield to the demand for Sunday laws. But those who fear God, cannot accept an institution that violates a precept of the Decalogue. On this battlefield will be fought the last great conflict in the controversy between truth and error. And we are not left in doubt as to the issue. Today, as in the days of Esther and Mordecai, the Lord will vindicate His truth and His people.—[Prophets and Kings, 605, 606.](#)

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Nehemiah United Petitions With Holy Endeavor

The recital of the condition of Jerusalem awakened the sympathy of the monarch without arousing his prejudices. Another question gave the opportunity for which Nehemiah had long waited: “For what dost thou make request?” But the man of God did not venture to reply till he had sought direction from One higher than Artaxerxes. He had a sacred trust to fulfill, in which he required help from the king; and he realized that much depended upon his presenting the matter in such a way as to win his approval and enlist his aid. “I prayed,” he said, “to the God of heaven.” In that brief prayer, Nehemiah pressed into the presence of the King of kings, and won to his side a power that can turn hearts as the rivers of waters are turned.

To pray as Nehemiah prayed in his hour of need is a resource at the command of the Christian under circumstances when other forms of prayer may be impossible....

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Nehemiah, in that brief moment of prayer to the King of kings, gathered courage to tell Artaxerxes of his desire to be released for a time from his duties at the court; and he asked for authority to build up the waste places of Jerusalem, and to make it once more a strong and defended city. Momentous results to the Jewish nation hung

upon this request. "And," Nehemiah declares, "the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me."

Having secured the help he sought, Nehemiah with prudence and forethought proceeded to make the arrangements necessary to insure the success of the enterprise. He neglected no precaution that would tend to its accomplishment. Not even to his own countrymen did he reveal his purpose. While he knew that many would rejoice in his success, he feared that some, by acts of indiscretion, might arouse the jealousy of their enemies, and perhaps bring about the defeat of the undertaking.

His request to the king had been so favorably received that Nehemiah was encouraged to ask for still further assistance. To give dignity and authority to his mission, as well as to provide protection on the journey, he asked for and secured a military escort. He obtained royal letters to the governors of the provinces beyond the Euphrates, the territory through which he must pass on his way to Judea; and he obtained, also, a letter to the keeper of the king's forest in the mountains of Lebanon, directing him to furnish such timber as would be needed. That there might be no occasion for complaint that he had exceeded his commission, Nehemiah was careful to have the authority and privileges accorded him, clearly defined.

[75] This example of wise forethought and resolute action should be a lesson to all Christians. God's children are not only to pray in faith, but to work with diligent and provident care. They encounter many difficulties, and often hinder the working of Providence in their behalf, because they regard prudence and painstaking effort as having little to do with religion. Nehemiah did not regard his duty done when he had wept and prayed before the Lord. He united his petitions with holy endeavor, putting forth earnest, prayerful efforts for the success of the enterprise in which he was engaged. Careful consideration and well-matured plans are essential to the carrying forward of sacred enterprises today as in the time of the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls.

Nehemiah did not depend upon uncertainty. The means what he lacked he solicited from those who were able to bestow. And the Lord is still willing to move upon the hearts of those in possession of His goods, in behalf of the cause of truth. Those who labor for Him are to avail themselves of the help that He prompts men to give.

These gifts may open ways by which the light of truth shall go to many benighted lands. The donors may have no faith in Christ, no acquaintance with His word; but their gifts are not on this account to be refused.—[Prophets and Kings, 631-634](#).

A Military Escort, Cautious Plains, Royal Letters, And A Royal Commission

Nehemiah's journey to Jerusalem was accomplished in safety. The royal letters to the governors of the provinces along his route, secured him honorable reception and prompt assistance. No enemy dared molest the official who was guarded by the power of the Persian king and treated with marked consideration by the provincial rulers. His arrival in Jerusalem, however, with a military escort, showing that he had come on some important mission, excited the jealousy of the heathen tribes living near the city, who had so often indulged their enmity against the Jews by heaping upon them injury and insult....

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Nehemiah continued to exercise the same caution and prudence that had hitherto marked his course. Knowing that bitter and determined enemies stood ready to oppose him, he concealed the nature of his mission from them until a study of the situation should enable him to form his plans. Thus he hoped to secure the cooperation of the people and set them at work before the opposition of his enemies should be aroused....

Nehemiah bore a royal commission requiring the inhabitants to cooperate with him in rebuilding the walls of the city, but he did not depend upon the exercise of authority.—[Prophets and Kings, 635-637](#).

Peter And John Suffered For Their Faith

Filled with indignation, the priests laid violent hands on Peter and John, and put them in the common prison....

The disciples were not intimidated or cast down by this treatment. The Holy Spirit brought to their minds the words spoken by Christ: "The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will

keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me." "They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." "These things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them."

[77] The God of heaven, the mighty Ruler of the universe, took the matter of the imprisonment of the disciples into His own hands; for men were warring against His work. By night the angel of the Lord opened the prison doors, and said to the disciples, "Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life." This command was directly contrary to the order given by the Jewish rulers; but did the apostles say, We cannot do this until we have consulted the magistrates, and received permission from them? No; God had said, "Go," and they obeyed. "They entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught."

Although the apostles were miraculously delivered from prison, they were not saved from examination and punishment. Christ had said when He was with them, "Take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils." By sending an angel to deliver them, God had given them a token of His love, and an assurance of His presence. It was now their part to suffer for the sake of the one whose gospel they were preaching.

In the history of prophets and apostles, are many noble examples of loyalty to God. Christ's witnesses have endured imprisonment, torture, and death itself, rather than break God's commands. The record left by Peter and John is as heroic as any in the gospel dispensation. As they stood for the second time before the men who seemed bent on their destruction, no fear or hesitation could be discerned in their words or attitude. And when the high priest said, "Did we not straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us," Peter answered, "We ought to obey God rather than men." It was an angel from heaven who delivered them from prison, and bade them teach in the temple. In following his directions they were obeying the divine command, and this they must continue to do, at whatever cost to themselves.—[The Acts of the Apostles, 78-82.](#)

Stephen's Defense

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As Stephen stood face to face with his judges to answer to the charge of blasphemy, a holy radiance shone upon his countenance, and “all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.” Many who beheld this light trembled and veiled their faces, but the stubborn unbelief and prejudice of the rulers did not waver.

When Stephen was questioned as to the truth of the charges against him, he began his defense in a clear, thrilling voice, which rang through the council hall. In words that held the assembly spellbound, he proceeded to rehearse the history of the chosen people of God. He showed a thorough knowledge of the Jewish economy, and the spiritual interpretation of it, now made manifest through Christ. He repeated the words of Moses that foretold of the Messiah: “A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear.” He made plain his own loyalty to God and to the Jewish faith, while he showed that the law in which the Jews trusted for salvation had not been able to save Israel from idolatry. He connected Jesus Christ with all the Jewish history....

In the cruel faces about him, the prisoner read his fate; but he did not waver. For him the fear of death was gone. For him the enraged priests and the excited mob had no terror. The scene before him faded from his vision. To him, the gates of heaven were ajar, and looking in, he saw the glory of the courts of God, and Christ, as if just risen from His throne, standing ready to sustain His servant. In words of triumph, Stephen exclaimed, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.”

As he described the glorious scene upon which his eyes were gazing, it was more than his persecutors could endure. Stopping their ears, that they might not hear his words, and uttering loud cries, they ran furiously upon him with one accord, “and cast him out of the city.” “And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said. this, he fell asleep.”—[The Acts of the Apostles, 99-101.](#)

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Peter Ready To Yield Up His Life

The apostle was not intimidated by the situation. Since his reinstatement after his denial of Christ, he had unflinchingly braved danger, and had shown a noble courage and boldness in preaching a crucified, risen, and ascended Saviour. As he lay in his cell, he called to mind the words that Christ had spoken to him: “Verily, verily I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.” Peter believed that the time had come for him to yield up his life for Christ’s sake.—[The Review and Herald, April 27, 1911](#). Republished in [The S.D.A. Bible Commentary 6:1061](#).

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Paul And Barnabas Before Civil Authorities

(See [Acts 14](#))

The increasing popularity of the message borne by the apostles, filled the unbelieving Jews with envy and hatred, and they determined to stop the labors of Paul and Barnabas at once. By means of false and exaggerated reports, they led the authorities to fear that the entire city was in danger of being incited to insurrection. They declared that large numbers were attaching themselves to the apostles, and suggested that it was for secret and dangerous designs.

In consequence of these charges, the disciples were repeatedly brought before the authorities; but their defense was so clear and sensible, and their statement of what they were teaching so calm and comprehensive, that a strong influence was exerted in their favor. Although the magistrates were prejudiced against them by the false statements they had heard, they dared not condemn them. They could but acknowledge that the teachings of Paul and Barnabas tended to make men virtuous, law-abiding citizens, and that the morals and order of the city would improve if the truths taught by the apostles were accepted.

Through the opposition that the disciples met, the message of truth gained great publicity; the Jews saw that their efforts to thwart the work of the new teachers resulted only in adding greater numbers

to the new faith. “The multitude of the city was divided: and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles.”—[The Acts of the Apostles, 178](#).

Paul And Silas At Philippi

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(See [Acts 16:13-40](#))

Many others in the city were interested in gaining money through satanic delusions; and these, fearing the influence of a power that could so effectually stop their work, raised a mighty cry against the servants of God. They brought the apostles before the magistrates with the charge: “These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, and teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans,”

Stirred by a frenzy of excitement, the multitude rose against the disciples. A mob spirit prevailed, and was sanctioned by the authorities, who tore the outer garments from the apostles, and commanded that they should be scourged. “And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailer to keep them safely: who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.”

The apostles suffered extreme torture because of the painful position in which they were left, but they did not murmur. Instead, in the utter darkness and desolation of the dungeon, they encouraged each other by words of prayer and sang praises to God because they were found worthy to suffer shame for His sake. Their hearts were cheered by a deep and earnest love for the cause of their Redeemer. Paul thought of the persecution he had been instrumental in bringing upon the disciples of Christ, and he rejoiced that his eyes had been opened to see, and his heart to feel, the power of the glorious truths which once he despised....

But while men were cruel and vindictive, or criminally negligent of the solemn responsibilities devolving upon them, God had not forgotten to be gracious to His servants. All heaven was interested in the men who were suffering for Christ's sake, and angels were sent to visit the prison. At their tread the earth trembled. The heavily bolted prison doors were thrown open; the chains and fetters fell

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from the hands and feet of the prisoners; and a bright light flooded the prison....

The citizens of Philippi had been greatly terrified by the earthquake; and when, in the morning, the officers of the prison told the magistrates of what had occurred during the night, they were alarmed, and sent the servants to liberate the apostles. But Paul declared, "They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out."

The apostles were Roman citizens, and it was unlawful to scourge a Roman, save for the most flagrant crime, or to deprive him of his liberty without a fair trial. Paul and Silas had been publicly imprisoned, and they now refused to be privately released without the proper explanation on the part of the magistrates.

When this word was brought to the authorities, they were alarmed for fear that the apostles would complain to the emperor; and going at once to the prison they apologized to Paul and Silas for the injustice and cruelty done them, and personally conducted them out of the prison, entreating them to depart from the city. The magistrates feared the apostles' influence over the people, and they also feared the Power that had interposed in behalf of these innocent men.

Acting upon the instruction given by Christ, the apostles would not urge their presence where it was not desired. "They went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed."

[83] The apostles did not regard as in vain their labors in Philippi. They had met much opposition and persecution; but the intervention of Providence in their behalf, and the conversion of the jailer and his household, more than atoned for the disgrace and suffering they had endured. The news of their unjust imprisonment and miraculous deliverance became known through all that region, and this brought the work of the apostles to the notice of a large number who otherwise would not have been reached. [The Acts of the Apostles, 213-218.](#)

Paul Before Felix

(See [Acts 24.](#))

Paul wasted no words in compliments, but simply stated that he could the more cheerfully defend himself before Felix, since the latter had been so long a procurator, and therefore had so good an understanding of the laws and customs of the Jews. Referring to the charges brought against him, he plainly showed that not one of them was true. He declared that he caused no disturbance in any part of Jerusalem, nor had he profaned the sanctuary....

In a candid, straightforward manner he stated the object of his visit to Jerusalem, and the circumstances of his arrest and trial....

The apostle spoke with earnestness and evident sincerity, and his words carried with them a weight of conviction....

Paul's plain statement of the facts in the case enabled Felix to understand still more clearly the motives by which the Jews were governed in attempting to convict the apostle of sedition and treasonable conduct. The governor would not gratify them by unjustly condemning a Roman citizen, neither would he give him up to them to be put to death without a fair trial....

It was not long after this that Felix and his wife, Drusilla, sent for Paul, in order that in a private interview they might hear from him "concerning the faith in Christ." They were willing and even eager to listen to these new truths—truths which they might never hear again, and which, if rejected, would prove a swift witness against them in the day of God.

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Paul regarded this as a God-given opportunity, and faithfully he improved it. He knew that he stood in the presence of one who had power to put him to death, or to set him free; yet he did not address Felix and Drusilla with praise or flattery. He knew that his words would be to them a savor of life or of death, and forgetting all selfish considerations, he sought to arouse them to a sense of their peril.

The apostle realized that the gospel had a claim upon whoever might listen to his words; that one day they would stand either among the pure and holy around the great white throne, or with those to whom Christ would say, "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity." He knew that he must meet every one of his hearers before the tribunal of heaven, and must there render an account, not only for all that he had said and done, but for the motive and spirit of his words and deeds.

So violent and cruel had been the course of Felix, that few had ever before dared even to intimate to him that his character and conduct were not faultless. But Paul had no fear of man. He plainly declared his faith in Christ, and the reasons for that faith, and was thus led to speak particularly of those virtues essential to Christian character, but of which the haughty pair before him were so strikingly destitute....

[85] A ray of light from heaven had been permitted to shine upon Felix, when Paul reasoned with him concerning righteousness, temperance, and a judgment to come. That was his heaven-sent opportunity to see and to forsake his sins. But he said to the messenger of God, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." He had slighted his last offer of mercy. Never was he to receive another call from God.—[The Acts of the Apostles, 420-423, 427.](#)

Paul Before Festus

(See [Acts 25:8-12](#))

This was not what the Jews wanted. They had not forgotten their former defeat at Caesarea. In contrast with the calm bearing and forcible arguments of the apostle, their own malignant spirit and baseless accusations would appear in the worst possible light. Again they urged that Paul be brought to Jerusalem for trial, but Festus held firmly to his purpose of giving Paul a fair trial at Caesarea. God in His providence controlled the decision of Festus, that the life of the apostle might be lengthened....

Upon returning to Caesarea, after a few days' sojourn at Jerusalem, Festus "the next day sitting on the judgment-seat commanded Paul to be brought." "The Jews which came down from Jerusalem stood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove." Being on this occasion without a lawyer, the Jews preferred their charges themselves. As the trial proceeded, the accused with calmness and candor clearly showed the falsity of their statements.

Festus discerned that the question in dispute related wholly to Jewish doctrines, and that, rightly understood, there was nothing in the charges against Paul, could they be proved, that would render

him subject to sentence of death, or even to imprisonment. Yet he saw clearly the storm of rage that would be created if Paul were not condemned or delivered into their hands. And so, “willing to do the Jews a pleasure,” Festus turned to Paul, and asked if he was willing to go to Jerusalem under his protection, to be tried by the Sanhedrim. [86]

The apostle knew that he could not look for justice from the people who by their crimes were bringing down upon themselves the wrath of God.... He therefore decided to exercise his privilege, as a Roman citizen, of appealing to Caesar.

In answer to the governor's question, Paul said: “I stand at Caesar's judgment-seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest. For if I be an offender, or have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things thereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Caesar.”—[The Acts of the Apostles, 429, 430.](#)

Paul Before King Agrippa

(See [Acts 26](#))

The aged prisoner, chained to his soldier guard, had in his appearance nothing that would lead the world to pay him homage. Yet in this man, apparently without friends or wealth or position, and held a prisoner for his faith in the Son of God, all heaven was interested. Angels were his attendants. Had the glory of one of those shining messengers flashed forth, the pomp and pride of royalty would have paled; king and courtiers would have been stricken to the earth, as were the Roman guards at the sepulcher of Christ....

The apostle was not disconcerted by the brilliant display or the high rank of his audience; for he knew of how little worth are worldly wealth and position. Earthly pomp and power could not for a moment daunt his courage or rob him of his self-control.

“I think myself happy, King Agrippa,” he declared, “because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews: especially because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently.” [87]

Paul related the story of his conversion from stubborn unbelief to faith in Jesus of Nazareth as the world's Redeemer. He described the heavenly vision that at first had filled him with unspeakable terror, but afterward proved to be a source of the greatest consolation,—a revelation of divine glory, in the midst of which sat enthroned He whom he had despised and hated, whose followers he was even then seeking to destroy. From that hour Paul had been a new man, a sincere and fervent believer in Jesus, made such by transforming mercy.

With clearness and power Paul outlined before Agrippa the leading events connected with the life of Christ on earth. He testified that the Messiah of prophecy had already appeared in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. He showed how the Old Testament Scriptures had declared that the Messiah was to appear as a man among men; and how in the life of Jesus had been fulfilled every specification outlined by Moses and the prophets. For the purpose of redeeming a lost world, the divine Son of God had endured the cross, despising the shame, and had ascended to heaven triumphant over death and the grave....

The whole company had listened spellbound to Paul's account of his wonderful experiences. The apostle was dwelling upon his favorite theme. None who heard him could doubt his sincerity. But in the full tide of his persuasive eloquence he was interrupted by Festus, who cried out, "Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad."

[88] The apostle replied, "I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness. For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely; for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner." Then, turning to Agrippa, he addressed him directly, "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest."

Deeply affected, Agrippa for the moment lost sight of his surroundings and the dignity of his position. Conscious only of the truths which he had heard, seeing only the humble prisoner standing before him as God's ambassador, he answered involuntarily, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."

Earnestly the apostle made answer, "I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am," adding, as he raised his fettered hands, "except these bonds."...

The king's curiosity was satisfied, and rising from his seat, he signified that the interview was at an end. As the assembly dispersed, they talked among themselves, saying, "This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds."—[The Acts of the Apostles, 434-438.](#)

John Answers For His Faith In Rome

The rulers of the Jews were filled with bitter hatred against John for his unwavering fidelity to the cause of Christ. They declared that their efforts against the Christians would avail nothing so long as John's testimony kept ringing in the ears of the people. In order that the miracles and teachings of Jesus might be forgotten, the voice of the bold witness must be silenced.

John was accordingly summoned to Rome to be tried for his faith. Here before the authorities the apostle's doctrines were misstated. False witnesses accused him of teaching seditious heresies. By these accusations his enemies hoped to bring about the disciple's death.

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John answered for himself in a clear and convincing manner, and with such simplicity and candor that his words had a powerful effect. His hearers were astonished at his wisdom and eloquence. But the more convincing his testimony, the deeper was the hatred of his opposers. The emperor Domitian was filled with rage. He could neither dispute the reasoning of Christ's faithful advocate, nor match the power that attended his utterance of truth; yet he determined that he would silence his voice.

John was cast into a cauldron of boiling oil; but the Lord preserved the life of His faithful servant, even as He preserved the three Hebrews in the fiery furnace. As the words were spoken, Thus perish all who believe in that deceiver, Jesus Christ of Nazareth, John declared, My Master patiently submitted to all that Satan and his angels could devise to humiliate and torture Him. He gave His life to save the world. I am honored in being permitted to suffer for His sake. I am a weak, sinful man. Christ was holy, harmless, undefiled. He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth.

These words had their influence, and John was removed from the cauldron by the very men who had cast him in.

Again the hand of persecution fell heavily upon the apostle. By the emperor's decree John was banished to the isle of Patmos, condemned "for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." Here, his enemies thought, his influence would no longer be felt, and he must finally die of hardship and distress.—[The Acts of the Apostles, 569-570.](#)

[90] **John's Experience A Lesson Of Strength And Comfort**

In the experience of the apostle John under persecution, there is a lesson of wonderful strength and comfort for the Christian. God does not prevent the plottings of wicked men, but He causes their devices to work for good to those who in trial and conflict maintain their faith and loyalty. Often the gospel laborer carries on his work amid storms of persecution, bitter opposition, and unjust reproach. At such times let him remember that the experience to be gained in the furnace of trial and affliction is worth all the pain it costs. Thus God brings His children near to Him, that He may show them their weakness and His strength. He teaches them to lean on Him. Thus He prepares them to meet emergencies, to fill positions of trust, and to accomplish the great purpose for which their powers were given them.—[The Acts of the Apostles, 574.](#)

The Honored Of God

God honors those who honor Him by obedience to His precepts. John, the beloved disciple, was banished to the isle of Patmos for his faithfulness. "I John," he writes, "who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."—[The Signs of the Times, February 27, 1912.](#)

[91] **Light Bearers To The Word**

In all ages the "Spirit of Christ which was in them" has made God's true children the light of the people of their generation. Joseph

was a light-bearer in Egypt. In his purity and benevolence and filial love, he represented Christ in the midst of a nation of idolaters. While the Israelites were on their way from Egypt to the promised land, the true hearted among them were a light to the surrounding nations. Through them God was revealed to the world. From Daniel and his companions in Babylon, and from Mordecai in Persia, bright beams of light shone out amid the darkness of the kingly courts. In like manner the disciples of Christ are set as light bearers on the way to heaven; through them the Father's mercy and goodness are made manifest to a world enshrouded in the darkness of misapprehension of God.—[The Review and Herald, July 27, 1905.](#)

Luther's Positions—No Resort To Secular Power

One of the principles most firmly maintained by Luther was that there should be no resort to secular power in support of the Reformation, and no appeal to arms for its defense. He rejoiced that the gospel was confessed by princes of the empire; but when they proposed to unite in a defensive league, he declared that “the doctrine of the gospel should be defended by God alone.... The less man meddled in the work, the more striking would be God's intervention in its behalf. All the politic precautions suggested were, in his view, attributable to unworthy fear and sinful mistrust.”—[The Great Controversy, 209.](#)

The Grand Principle Of The Reformers

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The grand principle maintained by Tyndale, Frith, Latimer, and the Ridleys was the divine authority and sufficiency of the sacred Scriptures. They rejected the assumed authority of Popes, councils, fathers, and kings to rule the conscience in matters of religious faith. The Bible was their standard, and to this they brought all doctrines and all claims. Faith in God and His Word sustained these holy men as they yielded up their lives at the stake.—[The Story of Redemption, 352.](#)

Some Of God's Great Men

Sacred history presents many illustrations of the results of true education. It presents many noble examples of men whose characters were formed under divine direction, men whose lives were a blessing to their fellow men and who stood in the world as representatives of God. Among these are Joseph and Daniel, Moses, Elisha, and Paul—the greatest statesmen, the wisest legislator, one of the most faithful of reformers, and, except Him who spoke as never man spake, the most illustrious teacher that this world has known....

In the bitter life of a stranger and a slave, amidst the sights and sounds of vice and the allurements of heathen worship, a worship surrounded with all the attractions of wealth and culture and the pomp of royalty, Joseph was steadfast. He had learned the lesson of obedience to duty. Faithfulness in every station, from the most lowly to the most exalted, trained every power for highest service.

[93] At the time when he was called to the court of Pharaoh, Egypt was the greatest of nations. In civilization, art, learning, she was unequalled. Through a period of utmost difficulty and danger, Joseph administered the affairs of the kingdom; and this he did in a manner that won the confidence of the king and the people. Pharaoh “made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance: to bind his princes at his pleasure; and teach his senators wisdom.” [Psalm 105:21, 22....](#)

At the court of Babylon were gathered representatives from all lands, men of the choicest talents, men the most richly endowed with natural gifts, and possessed of the highest culture this world could bestow; yet amidst them all, the Hebrew captives were without a peer. In physical strength and beauty, in mental vigor and literary attainment, they stood unrivaled. “In all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm.” [Daniel 1:20.](#)

Unwavering in allegiance to God, unyielding in the mastery of himself, Daniel's noble dignity and courteous deference won for him in his youth the “favor and tender love” of the heathen officer in whose charge he was. The same characteristics marked his life. Speedily he rose to the position of prime minister of the kingdom.

Throughout the reign of successive monarchs, the downfall of the nation, and the establishment of a rival kingdom, such were his wisdom and statesmanship, so perfect his tact, his courtesy, and his genuine goodness of heart, combined with fidelity to principle, that even his enemies were forced to the confession that “they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful.” [Daniel 6:4](#).

While Daniel clung to God with unwavering trust, the spirit of prophetic power came upon him. While honored by men with the responsibility of the court and the secrets of the kingdom, he was honored by God as His ambassador, and taught to read the mysteries of ages to come. Heathen monarchs, through association with Heaven's representative, were constrained to acknowledge the God of Daniel....

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By their wisdom and justice, by the purity and benevolence of their daily life, by their devotion to the interests of the people,—and they, idolaters,—Joseph and Daniel proved themselves true to the principles of their early training, true to Him whose representatives they were. These men, both in Egypt and in Babylon, the whole nation honored; and in them a heathen people, and all the nations with which they were connected, beheld an illustration of the love of Christ.

What a lifework was that of these noble Hebrews! As they bade farewell to their childhood home, how little did they dream of their high destiny! Faithful and steadfast, they yielded themselves to the divine guiding, so that through them God could fulfill His purpose.

The same mighty truths that were revealed through these men, God desires to reveal through the youth and the children of today. The history of Joseph and Daniel is an illustration of what He will do for those who yield themselves to Him and with the whole heart seek to accomplish His purpose.

The greatest want of the world is the want of men—men who will not be bought or sold, men who in their inmost souls are true and honest, men who do not fear to call sin by its right name, men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall....

These histories are of vital interest. To none are they of deeper importance than to the youth. Moses renounced a prospective kingdom, Paul the advantages of wealth and honor among his people

[95] for a life of burden bearing in God's service. To many the life of these men appears one of renunciation and sacrifice. Was it really so? Moses counted the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt. He counted it so because it was so. Paul declared: "What things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ. Yea, verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may gain Christ." [Philippians 3:7, 8](#), R.V. margin. He was satisfied with his choice.

Moses was offered the palace of the Pharaohs and the monarch's throne; but the sinful pleasures that make men forget God were in those lordly courts, and he chose instead the "durable riches and righteousness." [Proverbs 8:18](#). Instead of linking himself with the greatness of Egypt, he chose to bind up his life with God's purpose. Instead of giving laws to Egypt, he by divine direction enacted laws for the world. He became God's instrument in giving to men those principles that are the safeguard alike of the home and of society, that are the cornerstone of the prosperity of nations—principles recognized today by the world's greatest men as the foundation of all that is best in human governments.

The greatness of Egypt is in the dust. Its power and civilization have passed away. But the work of Moses can never perish. The great principles of righteousness which he lived to establish are eternal.—[Education, 51, 52, 53, 55, 56, 57, 68, 69](#).

IV—Seventh-day Adventists And Politics

[96]

The question of voting,
political agitation,
political office, etc.

A Warning Against Political Entanglements

[97]

December 27, 1896.

To the General Conference of 1897:

I have words to speak to our brethren who shall assemble in conference in 1897. The present financial controversy ¹ has been presented to me as one of Satan's masterpieces for these last days. There is a power moving from beneath, which is after the working of the great enemy. I supposed our own people would step softly, and move very guardedly, and keep themselves aloof from all these new issues in regard to the circulating currency. This is not of the devising of God—the changing of the circulating currency. What will it effect?—It will cause a state of things that will bring oppression to the poor, and create great distress. It is one of the devil's schemes, and I thought those who believed the truth would not be deceived in the least degree upon this matter. But within the year 1896 matters have been presented to me which have made me tremble for our people. I have been where I heard conversations from those in positions of trust in our institutions, and there was great warmth in controversy over the different positions taken. The light given me was, This is the policy Satan has arranged to bring distress.

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¹The present financial controversy: This communication addressed to the General Conference session of 1897 and written in December, 1896, related to the issues of the Presidential campaign of William Jennings Bryan. Bryan was agitating certain monetary policies which he and his supporters felt held great promise. Some Seventh-day Adventists became involved in the issues. In her counsels Mrs. White repeatedly emphasized that our work was that of proclaiming the third angel's message, and that Seventh-day Adventists, as a separate and peculiar people, should not become involved in political questions.—
White Trustees

Would we know how we may best please the Saviour? It is not in engaging in political speeches, either in or out of the pulpit. It is in considering with fear and trembling every word we utter. Where the people assemble to worship God let not a word be spoken that shall divert the mind from the great central interest—Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. The third angel’s message is to be our burden of warning. The side issues are not for us to meddle with. The burden of the work is, Preach the word. There are those who have had an experience in preaching and laboring for the salvation of souls for whom Christ has given His precious life. That work is the special enterprise to engross everyone who feeds the flock of God. It is a time now when voices will be heard, “Hear. This is the way, walk in this path.” But the Lord Jesus says, “Follow thou Me. They that follow Me, shall not walk in darkness.” The saving of souls is to be our personal work, from which nothing is of sufficient moment to divert the mind. Christ came to our world to save souls, to diffuse light amid the moral darkness. A living voice is heard, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.”

Let Politics Alone

[99] I was surprised as I saw men who claim to believe the truth for this time, all excited in regard to matters—which relate to the Lord Jesus and eternal interests? No; but they seemed to be wonderfully excited in regard to the currency. Some ministers were distinguishing themselves by weaving these subjects into their discourses. They were excitably involving themselves, taking sides in regard to these questions, that the Lord did not lay upon them the burden to engage in. These persons seemed to have a large share of self-sufficiency. But they themselves really did not know what they were advocating. They knew not whether they were defending principles that originated in the councils of heaven or in the councils of Satan.

The voice of one in authority spoke with great decision, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. Read the directions given by the only begotten Son of God when enshrouded in the cloudy pillar. When that voice is obeyed, ye will not give your voice or influence to any policy to enrich a few, to bring oppression and suffering to the poorer class of humanity. There is in this excitement just

what separates those of the same faith. Is this bearing the divine credentials? Beware. See that your arm is not linked in the arm of a personal demon. He is in appearance as a man. He is walking about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, and he finds them among Seventh-day Adventists. He can terrify by his roaring; but, when it suits his purposes best, he has the sweet voice of an angel of light, and speaks of heavenly things. Does he not know all about heavenly glory?

I inquired why those who could read their Bibles and see the perils of these last days were so ready to snatch up matters they had best let alone. How can they connect with men who are advancing principles that originated in the councils of demons? Why do they not see that this is no work the Lord has set them to do? The answer came, Because their hearts are lifted up unto vanity. They are beguiled. They do not know how weak they are. There are many who will be deluded, and who, by pen and voice, will cast their whole influence to create an evil condition of things (a condition that will exist just the same whatever they may do); but they should not be bound up with the evil workers. All who are longing for some engagement that will represent Jehu riding furiously will have opportunity enough to distinguish themselves. Their arm will be linked with his who was once an exalted angel, and who has not forgotten his manners in the heavenly courts. These manners he will assume; and in representing persons, he will lure many whose life is not hid with Christ in God.

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Why Love Waxes Cold

Because iniquity abounds, the love of many waxes cold. Why should their love wax cold? Because they have not humbled their hearts and fled to their refuge, Jesus Christ. They thought they knew so much that they became fools, and allowed themselves to become depraved. Thus many souls will be lost. Worldly plans and devisings and strange sentiments and principles will be put forth by the prince of the power of the air, which are directly opposed to the law of God. Here we should reserve all our influence to act in upholding the truth. The sentiments brought to the front by politicians will be voiced by some who claim to be Sabbath-keepers. What angels

attend these in the pulpit as they stand up to give the flock poison instead of pure wheat, thoroughly winnowed? Here is the working of satanic agencies to bring in confusion, to bewitch the minds of old and young. Those who have been walking humbly with God will not be engrossed in advocating either side of this question. They will place themselves under His guardianship, and reveal that they are learning lessons from the Great Teacher, who has said, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."

[101] All this excitement and unrest is placing the mind where it will not dwell on the truth. Do you suppose that the world, the flesh, and the devil would be able to link up those souls who are humble and lowly of heart, and blind their understanding, so that they cannot tell what sort of companions they are choosing? If the eyes of many could be opened in their heedless march, they would see a mighty procession of people of all classes, all kinds, all nations, passing in the same ranks, classing themselves as the companions of demons, rapidly moving on in a continually swelling procession to certain ruin.

What shall I say? The faith of many, including those who preach the word, must be something different from what it is now, else their future eternal destiny is settled. The word of God, studied carefully, and obeyed, is the only thing that will make man pure, and keep him pure. This alone can save him from meddling with all the iniquities that prevail. Christians are to bear the stamp of the King of kings. All in our world are taking sides. We are not to take part in this political money strife. It has come into our ranks.

There are those, even among Seventh-day Adventists, who are under the reproof of the word of God, because of the way they acquired their property and use it, acting as if they owned it and created it, without an eye to the glory of God, and without earnest prayer to direct them in acquiring or using it. They are grasping at a serpent, which will sting them as an adder.

The Safe Way

Of God's people He says, "Her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the Lord: it shall not be treasured nor laid up." But many

who profess to believe the truth do not want God in their thoughts, any more than did the antediluvians or Sodomites. One sensible thought of God, awakened by the Holy Spirit, would spoil all their schemes. Self, self, self, has been their god, their alpha and their omega. [102]

Christians are safe only in acquiring money as God directs, and using it in channels which He can bless. God permits us to use His goods with an eye single to His glory to bless ourselves that we may bless others. Those who have adopted the world's maxim, and discarded God's specifications, who grasp all they can obtain of wages or goods, are poor, poor indeed, because the frown of God is upon them. They walk in paths of their own choosing, and do dishonor to God, to truth, to His goodness, to His mercy, His character.

There are men who stand in the pulpits as shepherds, professing to feed the flock, while the sheep are starving for the bread of life. There are long drawn out discourses, largely made up of the relation of anecdotes; but the hearts of the hearers are not touched. The feelings of some may be moved, they may shed a few tears, but their hearts are not broken. The Lord Jesus has been present when they have been presenting that which was called sermons, but their words were destitute of the dew and rain of heaven. They evidenced that the anointed ones described by Zechariah (see [chapter 4](#)) had not ministered to them that they might minister to others. When the anointed ones empty themselves through the golden pipes, the golden oil flows out of themselves into the golden bowls, to flow forth into the lamps, the churches. This is the work of every true, devoted servant of the living God. The Lord God of heaven cannot approve much that is brought into the pulpit by those who are professedly speaking the word of the Lord. They do not inculcate ideas that will be a blessing to those who hear. There is cheap, very cheap fodder placed before the people.

Strange Fire

When the speaker shall, in a haphazard way, strike in anywhere, as the fancy takes him, when he talks politics to the people, he is mingling the common fire with the sacred. He dishonors God. He

has not real evidence from God that he is speaking the truth. He does his hearers a grievous wrong. He may plant seeds which may strike their fibrous roots deep, and they spring up and bear poisonous fruit. How dare men do this? How dare they advance ideas when they do not know certainly whence they came, or that they are the truth?—[Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, 331-337](#).

[103] **Danger In Linking Up With Political Parties**

(Written Dec. 27, 1896.)

What kind of a spirit takes hold upon our people, when those who believe we are now under the third angel's message, the last message of mercy to the world, brothers in the same faith, appear wearing the badges of opposing political parties, proclaiming opposite sentiments and declaring their divided opinions....

There is danger, decided danger, for all who shall link themselves up with the political parties of the world. There is fraud on both sides. God has not laid upon any of our people the burden of linking up with either party. We are under Christ's banner, and every one who names the name of Christ is to depart from all iniquity.

[104] Sorrow and trial will come. The faith of every one is being tested. But our Lord is truth, He is love, and His scepter stretcheth over the universe. Surprises await every one. We know not what political crisis will come next. But in regard to the political agitators, the word of the Lord to us is, "Go not ye after them." True wisdom will not lead us to follow the example of the foolish rich man of the parable. True wisdom is revealed in seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.—[General Conference Daily Bulletin, February 17, 1897](#) (p. 59).

Politics

(Written June 16, 1899.)

Those who have charge of our institutions and our schools should guard themselves diligently, lest by their words and sentiments they lead the students into false paths. Those who teach the Bible in our churches and in our schools are not at liberty to unite in making apparent their prejudices for or against political men or measures,

because by so doing they stir up the minds of others, leading each to advocate his favorite theory. There are among those professing to believe present truth some who will thus be stirred up to express their sentiments and political preferences, so that division will be brought into the church.

The Lord would have His people bury political questions. On these themes silence is eloquence. Christ calls upon His followers to come into unity on the pure gospel principles which are plainly revealed in the word of God. We cannot with safety vote for political parties; for we do not know whom we are voting for. We cannot with safety take part in any political schemes. We cannot labor to please men who will use their influence to repress religious liberty, and to set in operation oppressive measures to lead or compel their fellow men to keep Sunday as the Sabbath. The first day of the week is not a day to be revered. It is a spurious sabbath, and the members of the Lord's family cannot participate with the men who exalt this day, and violate the law of God by trampling upon His Sabbath. The people of God are not to vote to place such men in office; for when they do this, they are partakers with them of the sins which they commit while in office. [105]

We are not to compromise principle by yielding to the opinions and prejudices which we may have encouraged before we united with God's commandment-keeping people. We have enlisted in the army of the Lord, and we are not to fight on the enemy's side, but on the side of Christ, where we can be a united whole, in sentiment, in action, in spirit, in fellowship. Those who are Christians indeed will be branches of the true vine, and will bear the same fruit as the vine. They will act in harmony, in Christian fellowship. They will not wear political badges, but the badge of Christ.

What are we to do, then?—Let political questions alone....

Those teachers in the church or in the school who distinguish themselves by their zeal in politics, should be relieved of their work and responsibilities without delay; for the Lord will not co-operate with them. The tithe should not be used to pay any one for speechifying on political questions. Every teacher, minister, or leader in our ranks who is stirred with a desire to ventilate his opinions on political questions, should be converted by a belief in the truth, or give up his work. His influence must tell as a laborer together with

God in winning souls to Christ, or his credentials must be taken from him. If he does not change, he will do harm, and only harm.

In the name of the Lord I would say to the teachers in our schools, Attend to your appointed work. You are not called upon by God to engage in politics....

To Have No Battles In The Political World

[106] I call upon my brethren who are appointed to educate, to change their course of action. It is a mistake for you to link your interests with any political party, to cast your vote with them or for them. Those who stand as educators, as ministers, as laborers together with God in any line, have no battles to fight in the political world. Their citizenship is in heaven. The Lord calls upon them to stand as a separate and peculiar people. He would have no schisms in the body of believers. His people are to possess the elements of reconciliation. Is it their work to make enemies in the political world?—No, no. They are to stand as subjects of Christ's kingdom, bearing the banner on which is inscribed, "The commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." They are to carry the burden of a special work, a special message. We have a personal responsibility, and this is to be revealed before the heavenly universe, before angels, and before men. God does not call upon us to enlarge our influence by mingling with society, by linking up with men on political questions, but by standing as individual parts of His great whole, with Christ as our head. Christ is our Prince, and as His subjects we are to do the work appointed us by God.

No Party Strife In The Family Of God

It is of the highest importance that the youth understand that Christ's people are to be united in one; for this unity binds men to God by the golden cords of love, and lays each one under obligation to work for his fellow men. The Captain of our salvation died for the human race that men might be made one with Him and with each other. As members of the human family we are individual parts of one mighty whole. No soul can be made independent of the rest. There is to be no party strife in the family of God; for the well-being

of each is the happiness of the whole. No partition walls are to be built up between man and man. Christ as the great center must unite all in one.

Christ is our teacher, our ruler, our strength, our righteousness; and in Him we are pledged to shun any course of action that will cause schism. The questions at issue in the world are not to be the theme of our conversation. We are to call upon the world to behold an uplifted Saviour, through whom we are made necessary to one another and to God. Christ trains His subjects to imitate His virtues, His meekness and lowliness, His goodness, patience, and love. Thus He consecrates heart and hand to His service, making man a channel through which the love of God can flow in rich currents to bless others. Then let there be no shade of strife among Seventh-day Adventists....

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In our periodicals we are not to exalt the work and characters of men in positions of influence, constantly keeping human beings before the people. But as much as you please you may uplift Christ our Saviour....

The condition of being received into the Lord's family is coming out from the world, separating from all its contaminating influences. The people of God are to have no connection with idolatry in any of its forms. They are to reach a higher standard. We are to be distinguished from the world, and then God says, "I will receive you as members of My royal family, children of the heavenly King." As believers in the truth we are to be distinct in practice from sin and sinners. Our citizenship is in heaven....

Exaltation Of God Vs. Exaltation Of Man

Why is so much attention given to human agencies, while there is so little reaching up of the mind to the eternal God? Why are those who claim to be children of the heavenly King so absorbed in the things of this world? Let the Lord be exalted. Let the word of the Lord be magnified. Let human beings be placed low, and let the Lord be exalted. Remember that earthly kingdoms, nations, monarchs, and statesmen, counselors, great armies, and all worldly magnificence and glory are as the dust of the balance. God has a reckoning to make with all nations. Every kingdom is to be brought

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low. Human authority is to be made as naught. Christ is the King of the world, and His kingdom is to be exalted.

The Lord desires all who bear the message for these last days to understand that there is a great difference between professors of religion who are not doers of the word, and the children of God, who are sanctified through the truth, who have that faith that works by love and purifies the soul. The Lord speaks of those who claim to believe the truth for this time, yet see nothing inconsistent in their taking part in politics, mingling with the contending elements of these last days, as the circumcised who mingle with the uncircumcised, and He declares that He will destroy both classes together without distinction. They are doing a work that God has not set them to do. They dishonor God by their party spirit and contention, and He will condemn both alike.

Not Recluses Yet Shunning Union With The World

The question may be asked, Are we to have no union whatever with the world? The word of the Lord is to be our guide. Any connection with infidels and unbelievers which would identify us with them is forbidden by the word. We are to come out from them and be separate. In no case are we to link ourselves with them in their plans or work. But we are not to live reclusive lives. We are to do worldlings all the good we possibly can. Christ has given us an example of this. When invited to eat with publicans and sinners, He did not refuse; for in no other way than by mingling with them could He reach this class. But on every occasion He gave them talents of words and influence. He opened up themes of conversation which brought things of eternal interest to their minds. And this Teacher enjoins us, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” On the temperance question take your position without wavering. Be as firm as a rock. Be not partakers of other men’s sins. Acts of dishonesty in business deal, with believers or unbelievers, should be reproved; and if they give no evidence of reformation, come out from among them and be separate.

There is a large vineyard to be cultivated; but while Christians are to work among unbelievers, they are not to appear like worldlings.

They are not to spend their time talking politics or acting as politicians, for by so doing, they give the enemy opportunity to come in and cause variance and discord. Those in the ministry who desire to stand as politicians should have their credentials taken from them; for this work God has not given to high or low among His people. God calls upon all who minister in doctrine to give the trumpet a certain sound. All who have received Christ, ministers and lay members, are to arise and shine; for great peril is right upon us. Satan is stirring the powers of earth. Everything in the world is in confusion. God calls upon His people to hold aloft the banner bearing the message of the third angel. We are not to go to Christ through any human being, but through Christ we are to understand the work He has given us to do for others.

God calls to His people, saying, “Come out from among them, and be ye separate.” He asks that the love which He has shown for them may be reciprocated and revealed by willing obedience to His commandments. His children are to separate themselves from politics, from any alliance with unbelievers. They are not to link their interests with the interests of the world. “Give proof of your allegiance to Me,” He says, “by standing as My chosen heritage, as a people zealous of good works.” Do not take part in political strife. Separate from the world, and refrain from bringing into the church or school ideas that will lead to contention or disorder. Dissension is the moral poison taken into the system by human beings who are selfish. God wants His servants to have clear perceptions, true and noble dignity, that their influence may demonstrate the power of truth. The Christian life is not to be a haphazard, emotional life. True Christian influence, exerted for the accomplishment of the work God has appointed, is a precious agency, and it must not be united with politics, or bound up in a confederacy with unbelievers. God is to be the center of attraction. Every mind that is worked by the Holy Spirit will be satisfied with Him.

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God calls upon the teachers in our schools not to become interested in the study of political questions. Take the knowledge of God into our schools. Your attention may be called to worldly wise men, who are not wise enough to understand what the Scriptures say in regard to the laws of God’s kingdom; but turn from these to Him who is the source of all wisdom. Seek first the kingdom

of God and His righteousness. Make this first and last. Seek most earnestly to know Him whom to know aright is life eternal. Christ and His righteousness is the salvation of the soul.—[Fundamentals of Christian Education, 475-484](#)

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Political Questions And Political Propaganda

(Addressed to “Dear Brethren”)

Our work is to watch, and wait, and pray. Search the Scriptures. Christ has given you warning not to mingle with the world. We are to come out from among them and be separate, “and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” ([2 Corinthians 6:17, 18](#)). Whatever the opinions you may entertain in regard to casting your vote in political questions, you are not to proclaim it by pen or voice. Our people need to be silent upon questions which have no relation to the third angel’s message. If ever a people needed to draw nigh to God, it is Seventh-day Adventists. There have been wonderful devices and plans made. A burning desire has taken hold of men or women to proclaim something, or bind up with something; they do not know what. But the silence of Christ upon many subjects was true eloquence....

My brethren, will you not remember that none of you have any burden laid upon you by the Lord to publish your political preferences in our papers, or to speak of them in the congregation, when the people assemble to hear the Word of the Lord....

We are not as a people to become mixed up with political questions. All would do well to take heed to the Word of God, Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers in political strife, nor bind with them in their attachments. There is no safe ground in which they can stand and work together. The loyal and, the disloyal have no equal ground on which to meet.

He who breaks one precept of the commandments of God is a transgressor of the whole law. Keep your voting to yourself. Do not

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feel it your duty to urge everyone to do as you do.—([Letter 4, 1898.](#)) [Selected Messages 2:336, 337.](#)

Not To Become Absorbed In Politics

God has warned His people not to become absorbed in politics. We cannot bear the sign of God as His commandment-keeping people, if we mingle with the strife of the world. We are not to give our minds to political issues. God's people are walking contrary to His will when they mix up with politics, and those who commence this work in the Southern states reveal that they are not taught and led by God, but by that spirit which creates contention and strife and every evil work. We are subjects of the Lord's kingdom, and we are to work to establish that kingdom in righteousness.—[Letter 92, 1899](#).

Neither you nor any of your brethren had any work to do in arguing or writing or taking any part whatever in politics. ² God was dishonored by all who acted any part in politics.

God has chosen a people who are to proclaim the third angel's message to the world. They are to be a separate and peculiar people in this world of churches who are transgressing His commandments....

The Lord would have His people a separate and peculiar people, bearing the sign and seal of the Sabbath, in preserving the memorial, the seventh day, upon which the Lord rested after His work of creation....

The redemption of men draws them away from political strife to rest and peace and quietude in God.—[Letter 11, 1897](#).

Gospel ministers are to keep their office free from all things secular or political, employing all their time and talents in lines of Christian effort.—[Testimonies for the Church 7:252](#).

The Lord has been greatly dishonored by His people catching up the issues that arise in this time of test and trial. His people are to keep free from politics. They are to stand as a separate, peculiar people; the name of God our Ruler is to be in their foreheads, showing to all that He is their sovereign.—[Manuscript 1, 1897](#).

If anyone shall seek to draw the workers into debate or controversy on political or other questions, take no heed to either persuasion or challenge.—[Testimonies for the Church 6:122](#).

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Avoid Identity With Party Interests

God's people have been called out of the world, that they may be separated from the world. It is not safe for them to take sides in politics, whatever preferences they may have. They are ever to remember that they are one in Christ. God calls upon them to enter their names as under His theocracy. He cannot approve of those who link up with worldings. We are entirely out of our place when we identify ourselves with party interests. Let us not forget that we are citizens of the kingdom of heaven. We are soldiers of the cross of Christ, and our work is to advance the interests of His kingdom.—[Manuscript 67, 1900](#), p. 10.

Our Pioneers Reach An Important Decision On Voting ³

Attended meeting in the eve. Had quite a free, interesting meeting. After it was time to close, the subject of voting was considered and dwelt upon. James first talked, then Brother [J.N.] Andrews talked, and it was thought by them best to give their influence in favor of right and against wrong. They think it right to vote in favor of temperance men being in office in our city instead of by their silence running the risk of having intemperate men put in office. Brother [David] Hewitt tells his experience of a few days [since] and is settled that [it] is right to cast his vote. Brother [Josiah] Hart talks well. Brother [Henry] Lyon opposes. No others object to voting, but Brother [J.P.] Kellogg begins to feel that it is right. Pleasant feelings exist among all the brethren. O that they may all act in the fear of God.

Men of intemperance have been in the office today in a flattering manner expressing their approbation of the course of the Sabbath-keepers not voting and expressed hopes that they will stick to their course and, like the Quakers, not cast their vote. Satan and his evil angels are busy at this time, and he has workers upon the earth. May Satan be disappointed, is my prayer.—[Selected Messages 2:337](#).

In 1881 Counselling To Vote

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A question on voting in favor of prohibition, or the restraint of the liquor traffic, was raised at a camp meeting held at Des Moines, Iowa, early in the summer of 1881. A proposed action was placed before the delegates which read:

“*Resolved*, That we express our deep interest in the temperance movement now going forward in this state; and that we instruct all our ministers to use their influence among our churches and with the people at large to induce them to put forth every consistent effort, by personal labor, *and at the ballot box*, in favor of the prohibitory amendment of the Constitution, which the friends of temperance are seeking to secure,”—[The Review and Herald, July 5, 1881](#). (Emphasis supplied.)

But some objected to the clause which called for action at “the ballot box,” and urged its deletion. Mrs. White, who was attending this camp meeting, had retired, but she was summoned to give her counsel.

Writing of it at the time she says: “I dressed and found I was to speak to the point of whether our people should vote for prohibition. I told them ‘Yes,’ and spoke twenty minutes.”—[Letter 6, 1881](#). Quoted in [Temperance, 255](#).

The Responsibility Of The Citizen

While we are in no wise to become involved in political questions, yet it is our privilege to take our stand decidedly on all questions relating to temperance reform. Concerning this I have often borne a plain testimony. In an article published in the *Review* of Nov. 8, 1881, I wrote:...

“There is a cause for the moral paralysis upon society. Our laws sustain an evil which is sapping their very foundations. Many deplore the wrongs which they know exist, but consider themselves

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²Note: The particular issue was the “gold and silver question” prominent in 1897

³Note: Excerpt from E. G. White diary, Sunday, March 6, 1859

free from all responsibility in the matter. This cannot be. Every individual exerts an influence in society.

“In our favored land, every voter has some voice in determining what laws shall control the nation. Should not that influence and that vote be cast on the side of temperance and virtue?....

“We may call upon the friends of the temperance cause to rally to the conflict and seek to press back the tide of evil that is demoralizing the world; but of what avail are all our efforts while liquor selling is sustained by law? Must the curse of intemperance forever rest like a blight upon our land? Must it every year sweep like a devouring fire over thousands of happy homes?

“We talk of the results, tremble at the results, and wonder what we can do with the terrible results, while too often we tolerate and even sanction the cause. The advocates of temperance fail to do their whole duty unless they exert their influence by precept and example—by voice and pen and vote—in favor of prohibition and total abstinence. We need not expect that God will work a miracle to bring about this reform, and thus remove the necessity for our exertion. We ourselves must grapple with this giant foe, our motto, No compromise and no cessation of our efforts till the victory is gained.”—[The Review and Herald, October 15, 1914](#). (See [Gospel Workers, 387, 388](#).)

[117] **Bearing Our Testimony On The Temperance Question**

How important it is that God’s messengers shall call the attention of statesmen, of editors, of thinking men everywhere, to the deep significance of the drunkenness and the violence now filling the land with desolation and deaths As faithful colaborers with God, we must bear a clear, decided testimony on the temperance question....

Now is our golden opportunity to co-operate with heavenly intelligences in enlightening the understanding of those who are studying the meaning of the rapid increase of crime and disaster. As we do our part faithfully, the Lord will bless our efforts to the saving of many precious souls.—[Temperance, 251](#). ([The Review and Herald, October 25, 1906](#).)

Aspirations To Fill Responsible Positions

[From an address delivered by Ellen G. White before the teachers and students of Battle Creek College at the time of the General Conference in Battle Creek, Mich, Nov. 15, 1883.]

Dear youth, what is the aim and purpose of your life? Are you ambitious for education that you may have a name and position in the world? Have you thoughts that you dare not express, that you may one day stand upon the summit of intellectual greatness; that you may sit in deliberative and legislative councils, and help to enact laws for the nation? There is nothing wrong in these aspirations. You may every one of you make your mark. You should be content with no mean attainments. Aim high, and spare no pains to reach the standard....

The important question with you now is, how to so choose and perfect your studies that you will maintain the solidity and purity of an untarnished Christian character, holding all temporal claims and interests in subjection to the higher claims of the gospel of Christ. You want now to build as you will be able to furnish, to so relate yourself to society and to life that you may answer the purpose of God in your creation. As disciples of Christ, you are not debarred from engaging in temporal pursuits; but you should carry your religion with you. Whatever the business you may qualify yourself to engage in, never entertain the idea that you cannot make a success of it without sacrificing principle. Balanced by religious principle, you may climb to any height you please.—[Fundamentals of Christian Education, 82, 83.](#)

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V—Satan’s Efforts To Destroy God’s Government—The Dragon’s Voice

Satan Takes the World Captive
The Dragon’s Voice in America Rome and Religious Liberty

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Through Pagan And Papal Rome

To the apostle John on the Isle of Patmos, were opened scenes of deep and thrilling interest in the experience of the church. Subjects of vast importance were presented to him in figures and symbols, that those who should turn from error to truth might become intelligent concerning the perils and conflicts before them. The history of the Christian world to the very close of time, was revealed to him. With great clearness he saw the position, dangers, conflicts, and final deliverance of the people of God. He records the closing message which is to ripen the harvest of the earth, either as sheaves for the heavenly garner, or as fagots for the fires of the last day.

John beheld in vision the redeemed people of God. He saw the triumph of those who had gained the victory over the beast and over his image. He marked the trials which they had endured for the truth’s sake. He saw their unyielding firmness in adhering to the commandments of God against the oppressive powers that sought to force them to disobedience.

Important Symbols

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Under the symbols of the great red dragon, a leopard-like beast, and a beast with lamblike horns; the earthly governments which would be especially engaged in trampling upon God’s law and persecuting His people, were presented to John. Their war is to be carried on till the close of time. The people of God, symbolized by a holy woman and her children, are represented as greatly in the minority. In the last days, only a remnant still exists. John speaks of them as

those that “keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

For many centuries, first through paganism and then through the Papacy, Satan exerted his powers to blot from the earth God's faithful witnesses. Both heathen and papists were actuated by the same dragon spirit. They differed only in that the Romish apostate, making a pretense of serving God, was the more dangerous and cruel foe. Through the agency of Romanism, Satan took the world captive. The professed church of God was swept into the ranks of this delusion, and for more than a thousand years the true people of God suffered under the dragon's ire.—[The Signs of the Times, February 8, 1910.](#)

The Dragon's Voice—In Democratic America

At the time when the Papacy, robbed of its strength, was forced to desist from persecution, John beheld a new power coming up to echo the dragon's voice, and carry forward the same cruel and blasphemous work. This power, the last that is to wage war against the church and the law of God, is represented by a beast with lamblike horns. The beasts preceding it had risen from the sea; but this came up out of the earth, representing the peaceful rise of the nation which it symbolized—the United States.

The “two horns like a lamb” well represent the character of our own Government, as expressed in its two fundamental principles,—Republicanism and Protestantism. These principles are the secret of our power and prosperity as a nation. Those who first found an asylum on the shores of America, rejoiced that they had reached a country free from the arrogant claims of popery and the tyranny of kingly rule. They determined to establish a government upon the broad foundation of civil and religious liberty.

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But the stern tracings of the prophetic pencil reveal a change in this peaceful scene. The beast with lamblike horns speaks with the voice of a dragon, and “exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him.” Prophecy declares that he will say to them that dwell on the earth, “that they should make an image to the beast,” and that it will cause “all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that

no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.” Thus Protestantism is to follow in the steps of the Papacy.

God’s Warning

It is at this time that the third angel is seen flying in the midst of heaven, proclaiming, “If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink, of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation.”

[123] In marked contrast with this multitude stands a little company who will not swerve from their allegiance to God. “Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” These are they of whom Isaiah speaks: “They that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.” The breach was made in the law of God when the Sabbath was changed by the Romish power. But the time has come for that divine institution to be restored. The breach is to be repaired, and the foundation of many generations to be raised up. And this message is the last to be given before the coming of the Lord. Immediately following its proclamation, the Son of man is seen by the prophet coming in glory to reap the harvest of the earth.—[The Signs of the Times, February 8, 1910.](#)

Catholics And Liberty Of Conscience

The papal church will never relinquish her claim to infallibility. All that she has done in her persecution of those who reject her dogmas, she holds to be right; and would she not repeat the same acts, should the opportunity be presented? Let the restraints now imposed by secular governments be removed, and Rome be reinstated in her former power, and there would speedily be a revival of her tyranny and persecution.

A well-known writer speaks thus of the attitude of the papal hierarchy as regards freedom of conscience, and of the perils which especially threaten the United States from the success of her policy.

“There are many who are disposed to attribute any fear of Roman Catholicism in the United States to bigotry or childishness. Such see nothing in the character and attitude of Romanism that is hostile to our free institutions, or find nothing portentous in its growth. Let us, then, first compare some of the fundamental principles of our government with those of the Catholic Church.

“The Constitution of the United States guarantees liberty of conscience. Nothing is dearer or more fundamental. Pope Pius IX, in his Encyclical Letter of August 15, 1854, said: ‘The absurd and erroneous doctrines or ravings in defense of liberty of conscience, are a most pestilential error—a pest, of all others, most to be dreaded in a state.’ The same pope, in his Encyclical Letter of December 8, 1864, anathematized ‘those who assert the liberty of conscience and of religious worship,’ also ‘all such as maintain that the church may not employ force.’

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“The pacific tone of Rome in the United States does not imply a change of heart. She is tolerant where she is helpless. Says Bishop O’Conner: ‘Religious liberty is merely endured until the opposite can be carried into effect without peril to the Catholic world.’... The archbishop of St. Louis once said: ‘Heresy and unbelief are crimes; and in Christian countries, as in Italy and Spain, for instance, where all the people are Catholics, and where the Catholic religion is an essential part of the law of the land, they are punished as other crimes.’...

“Every cardinal, archbishop, and bishop in the Catholic Church takes an oath of allegiance to the pope, in which occur the following words: ‘Heretics, schismatics, and rebels to our said lord (the pope), or his aforesaid successors, I will to my utmost persecute and oppose.’” —[The Great Controversy, 564, 565](#).

Illustration Of Rome’s Policy Toward Dissenters

A striking illustration of Rome’s policy toward those who disagree with her was given in the long and bloody persecution of the Waldenses, some of whom were observers of the Sabbath. Others suffered in a similar manner for their fidelity to the fourth commandment. The history of the churches of Ethiopia and Abyssinia is especially significant. Amid the gloom of the Dark Ages, the

[125] Christians of Central Africa were lost sight of and forgotten by the world, and for many centuries they enjoyed freedom in the exercise of their faith. But at last Rome learned of their existence, and the emperor of Abyssinia was soon beguiled into an acknowledgement of the pope as the vicar of Christ. Other concessions followed. An edict was issued forbidding the observance of the Sabbath under the severest penalties. But papal tyranny soon became a yoke so galling that the Abyssinians determined to break it from their necks. After a terrible struggle, the Romanists were banished from their dominions, and the ancient faith was restored. The churches rejoiced in their freedom, and they never forgot the lesson they had learned concerning the deception, the fanaticism, and the despotic power of Rome. Within their solitary realm they were content to remain, unknown to the rest of Christendom.—[The Great Controversy, 577, 578.](#)

Catholic Church One Vast Organization

The Roman Catholic Church, with all its ramifications throughout the world, forms one vast organization, under the control, and designed to serve the interests, of the papal see. Its millions of communicants, in every country on the globe, are instructed to hold themselves as bound in allegiance to the pope. Whatever their nationality or their government, they are to regard the authority of the church as above all other. Though they may take the oath pledging their loyalty to the state, yet back of this lies the vow of obedience to Rome, absolving them from every pledge inimical to her interests.

[126] History testifies of her artful and persistent efforts to insinuate herself into the affairs of nations; and having gained a foothold, to further her own aims, even at the ruin of princes and people. In the year 1204, Pope Innocent III extracted from Peter II, King of Arragon, the following extraordinary oath: “I, Peter, king of Arragonians, profess and promise to be ever faithful and obedient to my lord, Pope Innocent, to his Catholic successors, and the Roman Church, and faithfully to preserve my kingdom in his obedience, defending the Catholic faith, and persecuting heretical pravity.” This is in harmony with the claims regarding the power of the Roman

pontiff, that “it is lawful for him to depose emperors,” and that “he can absolve subjects from their allegiance to unrighteous rulers.”

And let it be remembered, it is the boast of Rome that she never changes. The principles of Gregory VII and Innocent III are still the principles of the Roman Catholic Church. And had she but the power, she would put them in practice with as much vigor now as in past centuries.—[The Great Controversy, 580, 581.](#)

Rome Dangerous Foe Of Religious Liberty

Protestants have tampered with and patronized popery; they have made compromises and concessions which papists themselves are surprised to see, and fail to understand. Men are closing their eyes to the real character of Romanism, and the dangers to be apprehended from her supremacy. The people need to be aroused to resist the advances of this most dangerous foe to civil and religious liberty.—[The Great Controversy, 566.](#)

Secret Of Roman Power

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A prayerful study of the Bible would show Protestants the real character of the papacy, and would cause them to abhor and to shun it; but many are so wise in their own conceit that they feel no need of humbly seeking God that they may be led into the truth. Although priding themselves on their enlightenment, they are ignorant both of the Scriptures and of the power of God. They must have some means of quieting their consciences; and they seek that which is least spiritual and humiliating. What they desire is a method of forgetting God which shall pass as a method of remembering Him. The papacy is well adapted to meet the wants of all these. It is prepared for two classes of mankind, embracing nearly the whole world,—those who would be saved by their merits, and those who would be saved in their sins. Here is the secret of its power.—[The Great Controversy, 572.](#)

Less To Say About Rome

There is need of a much closer study of the word of God; especially should Daniel and the Revelation have attention as never

before in the history of our work. We may have less to say in some lines, in regard to the Roman power and the papacy, but we should call attention to what the prophets and apostles have written under the inspiration of the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit has so shaped matters, both in the giving of the prophecy, and in the events portrayed, as to teach that the human agent is to be kept out of sight, hid in Christ, and the Lord God of heaven and His law are to be exalted. (Letter 57, 1896.)—[Counsels to Writers and Editors, 65.](#)

[128] Brethren, I feel hurt when I see that so many decided thrusts are made against the Catholics. Preach the truth, but restrain the words which show a harsh spirit; for such words cannot help or enlighten anyone. The *Echo* [*Bible Echo*, our church paper in Australia] is a paper that should be circulated largely. Do not do anything that would hinder its sale. There is no reason why it should not be as a light shining in a dark place. But for Christ's sake heed the admonitions which have been given in regard to making scathing remarks about the Catholics. Many Catholics read the *Echo*, and among the number there are honest souls who will accept the truth. But there is such a thing as shutting the door in their faces as they are about to enter. Put more cheering testimonies of thanksgiving into the *Echo*. Do not hedge up its way, and prevent it from going to all parts of the world by making it a medium for hard expressions. Satan rejoices when one word of bitterness is found on its pages. (Letter 20, 1896.)—[Counsels to Writers and Editors, 64, 65.](#)

VI—The Struggle For Religious Freedom In [129] **Reformation days and later**

Protest In Netherlands [130]

In the Netherlands the papal tyranny very early called forth resolute protest. Seven hundred years before Luther's time, the Roman pontiff was thus fearlessly impeached by two bishops, who, having been sent on an embassy to Rome, had learned the true character of the "holy see:" God "has made His queen and spouse, the church, a noble and everlasting provision for her family, with a dowry that is neither fading nor corruptible, and given her an eternal crown and scepter; ... all which benefits you like a thief intercept. You set up yourself in the temple as God; instead of pastor, you are become a wolf to the sheep; ... you would make us believe you are a supreme bishop, but you rather behave like a tyrant.... Whereas you ought to be a servant of servants, as you call yourself, you endeavor to become a lord of lords.... You bring the commands of God into contempt.... The Holy Ghost is the builder of all churches as far as the earth extends.... The city of our God, of which we are the citizens, reaches to all the regions of the heavens; and it is greater than the city, by the holy prophets named Babylon, which pretends to be divine, wins herself to heaven, and brags that her wisdom is immortal; and finally, though without reason, that she never did err, nor ever can."

Others arose from century to century to echo this protest. And those early teachers, who, traversing different lands and known by various names, bore the character of the Vaudois missionaries, and spread everywhere the knowledge of the gospel, penetrated to the Netherlands. Their doctrines spread rapidly. The Waldensian Bible they translated in verse into the Dutch language. They declared "that there was great advantage in it; no jests, no fables, no trifles, no deceits, but the words of truth; that indeed there was here and there a hard crust, but that the marrow and sweetness of that was good" [131]

and holy might be easily discovered in it.” Thus wrote the friends of the ancient faith, in the twelfth century.

Now began the Romish persecutions; but in the midst of fagots and torture the believers continued to multiply, steadfastly declaring that the Bible is the only infallible authority in religion, and that “no man should be coerced to believe, but should be won by preaching.”

The teachings of Luther found a congenial soil in the Netherlands, and earnest and faithful men arose to preach the gospel.—[The Great Controversy, 237, 238,](#)

Protest Of German Princes

One of the noblest testimonies ever uttered for the Reformation, was the Protest offered by the Christian princes of Germany at the Diet of Spires in 1529. The courage, faith, and firmness of those men of God, gained for succeeding ages liberty of thought and of conscience. Their Protest gave to the reformed church the name of Protestant; its principles are “the very essence of Protestantism.”—[The Great Controversy, 197.](#)

[132] “The principles contained in this celebrated Protest... constitute the very essence of Protestantism. Now this Protest opposes two abuses of man in matters of faith: the first is the intrusion of the civil magistrate, and the second the arbitrary authority of the church. Instead of these abuses, Protestantism sets the power of conscience above the magistrate, and the authority of the word of God above the visible church. In the first place, it rejects the civil power in divine things, and says with the prophets and apostles, ‘We must obey God rather than man.’ In presence of the crown of Charles the Fifth, it uplifts the crown of Jesus Christ. But it goes farther: it lays down the principle that all human teaching should be subordinate to the oracles of God.” The protesters had moreover affirmed their right to utter freely their convictions of truth. They would not only believe and obey, but teach what the word of God presents, and they denied the right of priest or magistrate to interfere. The Protest of Spires was a solemn witness against religious intolerance, and an assertion of the right of all men to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences.

The declaration had been made. It was written in the memory of thousands, and registered in the books of heaven, where no effort of man could erase it.—[The Great Controversy, 203, 201.](#)

The Anglican Or The “Bridge” Church

The English Reformers, while renouncing the doctrines of Romanism, had retained many of its forms. Thus though the authority and the creed of Rome were rejected, not a few of her customs and ceremonies were incorporated into the worship of the Church of England. It was claimed that these things were not matters of conscience; that though they were not commanded in Scripture, and hence were non-essential, yet not being forbidden, they were not intrinsically evil. Their observance tended to narrow the gulf which separated the reformed churches from Rome, and it was urged that they would promote the acceptance of the Protestant faith by Romanists. [133]

To the conservative and compromising, these arguments seemed conclusive. But there was another class that did not so judge. The fact that these customs “tended to bridge over the chasm between Rome and the Reformation,” was in their view a conclusive argument against retaining them. They looked upon them as badges of the slavery from which they had been delivered, and to which they had no disposition to return. They reasoned that God has in His word established the regulations governing His worship, and that men are not at liberty to add to these or to detract from them. The very beginning of the great apostasy was in seeking to supplement the authority of God by that of the church. Rome began by enjoining what God had not forbidden, and she ended by forbidding what He had explicitly enjoined.

Many earnestly desired to return to the purity and simplicity which characterized the primitive church. They regarded many of the established customs of the English Church as monuments of idolatry, and they could not in conscience unite in her worship. But the church, being supported by the civil authority, would permit no dissent from her forms. Attendance upon her service was required by law, and unauthorized assemblies for religious worship were prohibited, under penalty of imprisonment, exile, and death.

[134] At the opening of the seventeenth century the monarch who had just ascended the throne of England declared his determination to make the Puritans “conform, or ... harry them out of the land, or else worse.” Hunted, persecuted, and imprisoned, they could discern in the future no promise of better days, and many yielded to the conviction that for such as would serve God according to the dictates of their conscience, “England was ceasing forever to be a habitable place.” Some at last determined to seek refuge in Holland. Difficulties, losses, and imprisonment were encountered. Their purposes were thwarted, and they were betrayed into the hands of their enemies. But steadfast perseverance finally conquered, and they found shelter on the friendly shores of the Dutch Republic....

Though often pinched with poverty, they thanked God for the blessings which were still granted them, and found their joy in unmolested spiritual communion.—[The Great Controversy, 289-291.](#)

Pilgrim’s Indulge Spirit Of Intolerance

It was the desire for liberty of conscience that inspired the Pilgrims to brave the perils of the long journey across the sea, to endure the hardships and dangers of the wilderness, and with God’s blessing to lay, on the shores of America, the foundation of a mighty nation. Yet honest and God-fearing as they were, the Pilgrims did not yet comprehend the great principle of religious liberty. The freedom which they sacrificed so much to secure for themselves, they were not equally ready to grant to others. “Very few, even of the foremost thinkers and moralists of the seventeenth century, had any just conception of that grand principle, the outgrowth of the New Testament, which acknowledges God as the sole judge of human faith.” The doctrine that God has committed to the church the right to control the conscience, and to define and punish heresy, is one of the most deeply rooted of papal errors.

[135] While the Reformers rejected the creed of Rome, they were not entirely free from her spirit of intolerance. The dense darkness in which, through the long ages of her rule, popery had enveloped all Christendom, had not even yet been wholly dissipated. Said one of the leading ministers in the colony of Massachusetts Bay: “It

was toleration that made the world antichristian; and the church never took harm by the punishment of heretics” The regulation was adopted by the colonists, that only church members should have a voice in the civil government. A kind of state church was formed, all the people being required to contribute to the support of the clergy, and the magistrates being authorized to suppress heresy. Thus the secular power was in the hands of the church. It was not long before these measures led to the inevitable result—persecution.—[The Great Controversy, 292, 293.](#)

Roger Williams, Apostle Of Religious Freedom

Eleven years after the planting of the first colony, Roger Williards came to the new World. Like the early Pilgrims, he came to enjoy religious freedom; but unlike them, he saw what so few in his time had yet seen—that this freedom was the inalienable right of all, whatever might be their creed. He was an earnest seeker for truth, with Robinson holding it impossible that all the light from God’s word had yet been received. Williams “was the first person in modern Christendom to establish civil government on the doctrine of the liberty of conscience, the equality of opinions before the law.” He declared it to be the duty of the magistrate to restrain crime, but never to control the conscience. “The public or the magistrates may decide,” he said, “what is due from man to man; but when they attempt to prescribe a man’s duties to God, they are out of place, and there can be no safety; for it is clear that if the magistrate has the power, he may decree one set of opinions or beliefs today and another tomorrow; as had been done in England by different kings and queens, and by different popes and councils in the Roman Church; so that belief would become a heap of confusion.”

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Attendance at the services of the established church was required under a penalty of fine or imprisonment. “William’s reprobated the law; the worst statute in the English code was that which did but enforce attendance upon the parish church. To compel men to unite with those of a different creed, he regarded as an open violation of their natural rights; to drag to public worship the irreligious and the unwilling, seemed only like requiring hypocrisy.... ‘No one should be bound to worship, or,’ he added, ‘to maintain a worship, against

his own consent.' 'What!' exclaimed his antagonists, amazed at his tenets, 'is not the laborer worthy of his hire?' 'Yes,' replied he, 'from them that hire him.'"

Roger Williams was respected and beloved as a faithful minister, a man of rare gifts, of unbending integrity and true benevolence; yet his steadfast denial of the right of civil magistrates to authority over the church, and his demand for religious liberty, could not be tolerated. The application of this new doctrine, it was urged, would "subvert the fundamental state and government of the country." He was sentenced to banishment from the colonies, and finally, to avoid arrest, he was forced to flee, amid the cold and storms of winter, into the unbroken forest.

"For fourteen weeks," he says, "I was sorely tossed in a bitter season, not knowing what bread or bed did mean." But "the ravens fed me in the wilderness," and a hollow tree often served him for a shelter. Thus he continued his painful flight through the snow and the trackless forest, until he found refuge with an Indian tribe whose confidence and affection he had won while endeavoring to teach them the truths of the gospel.

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Making his way at last, after months of change and wandering, to the shores of Narragansett Bay, he there laid the foundation of the first state of modern times that in the fullest sense recognized the right of religious freedom. The fundamental principle of Roger Williams's colony, was "that every man should have liberty to worship God according to the light of his own conscience." His little state, Rhode Island, became the asylum of the oppressed, and it increased and prospered until its foundation principles—civil and religious liberty—became the cornerstone of the American Republic.

In that grand old document which our forefathers set forth as their bill of rights—the Declaration of Independence—they declared: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." And the Constitution guarantees, in the most explicit terms, the inviolability of conscience: "No religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office of public trust under the

United States.” “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”

“The framers of the Constitution recognized the eternal principle that man’s relation with his God is above human legislation, and his rights of conscience inalienable. Reasoning was not necessary to establish this truth; we are conscious of it in our own bosoms. It is this consciousness which, in defiance of human laws, has sustained so many martyrs in tortures and flames. They felt that their duty to God was superior to human enactments, and that man could exercise no authority over their consciences. It is an inborn principle which nothing can eradicate.”

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As the tidings spread through the countries of Europe, of a land where every man might enjoy the fruit of his own labor and obey the convictions of his conscience, thousands flocked to the shores of the New World, Colonies rapidly multiplied. “Massachusetts, by special law, offered free welcome and aid, at the public cost, to Christians of any nationality who might fly beyond the Atlantic ‘to escape from wars or famine, or the oppression of their persecutors.’ Thus the fugitive and the downtrodden were, by statute, made the guests of the commonwealth.” In twenty years from the first landing at Plymouth, as many thousand Pilgrims were settled in New England.

To secure the object which they sought, “they were content to earn a bare subsistence by a life of frugality and toil. They asked nothing from the soil but the reasonable returns of their own labor. No golden vision threw a deceitful halo around their path.... They were content with the slow but steady progress of their social polity. They patiently endured the privations of the wilderness, watering the tree of liberty with their tears, and with the sweat of their brow, till it took deep root in the land.”

The Bible was held as the foundation of faith, the source of wisdom, and the charter of liberty. Its principles were diligently taught in the home, in the school, and in the church, and its fruits were manifest in thrift, intelligence, purity, and temperance. One might be for years a dweller in the Puritan settlements, “and not see a drunkard, or hear an oath, or meet a beggar.” It was demonstrated that the principles of the Bible are the surest safeguards of national greatness. The feeble and isolated colonies grew to a confederation

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of powerful States, and the world marked with wonder the peace and prosperity of “a church without a pope, and a state without a king.”

But continually increasing numbers were attracted to the shores of America, actuated by motives widely different from those of the first Pilgrims. Though the primitive faith and purity exerted a widespread and moulding power, yet its influence became less and less as the numbers increased of those who sought only worldly advantage.

The regulation adopted by the early colonists, of permitting only members of the church to vote or to hold office in the civil government, led to most pernicious results. This measure had been accepted as a means of preserving the purity of the state, but it resulted in the corruption of the church. A profession of religion being the condition of suffrage and office holding, many, actuated solely by motives of worldly policy, united with the church without a change of heart. Thus the churches came to consist, to a considerable extent, of unconverted persons; and even in the ministry were those who not only held errors of doctrine, but who were ignorant of the renewing power of the Holy Spirit. Thus again was demonstrated the evil results, so often witnessed in the history of the church from the days of Constantine to the present, of attempting to build up the church by the aid of the state, of appealing to the secular power in support of the gospel of Him who declared, “My kingdom is not of this world.” The union of the church with the state, be the degree never so slight, while it may appear to bring the world nearer to the church, does in reality but bring the church nearer to the world.

[140] The great principle so nobly advocated by Robinson and Roger Williams, that truth is progressive, that Christians should stand ready to accept all the light which may shine from God’s holy Word, was lost sight of by their descendants. The Protestant churches of America and those of Europe as well—so highly favored in receiving the blessings of the Reformation, failed to press forward in the path of reform. Though a few faithful men arose, from time to time, to proclaim new truth and expose long cherished error, the majority, like the Jews in Christ’s day or the papists in the time of Luther, were content to believe as their fathers had believed, and to live as they had lived. Therefore religion again degenerated into formalism; and errors and superstitions which would have been

cast aside had the church continued to walk in the light of God's word, were retained and cherished. Thus the spirit inspired by the Reformation gradually died out, until there was almost as great need of reform in the Protestant churches as in the Roman Church in the time of Luther. There was the same worldliness and spiritual stupor, a similar reverence for the opinions of men, and substitution of human theories for the teachings of God's word.—[The Great Controversy, 293-298.](#)

VII—Tax Exemption, Grants and Favors

(The historical background revealed in Minutes and Correspondence)

Ellen G. White speaks on:
 Christian Courtesy
 Tax Exemption
 Receiving Gifts

(The Historical Background to the Question)

The Question As It Was Considered At The General Conference Of 1893

At the General Conference Session held February 17 to March 6, 1893, and at a time when Seventh-day Adventists had no mission work for the heathen, a report was received that free land was available for mission stations in Mashonaland, South Africa. We term this Question “A”

At this same Conference resolutions were brought in to repudiate tax exemptions on ecclesiastical property. We term this Question “B.” The picture of the involvements, attitudes of men, and the interrelationships of the two problems is best reflected by quoting in full the records of the discussions and actions relating to the two matters, noting the time sequence:

February 15, 1893 (Question “A”) Peter Wessels Tells Of Offer Of Free Land.

“Brother Peter Wessels spoke of the work in South Africa.... He spoke... of Mashonaland, or the Kaffir country, and of the interest which they felt that something should be done there. Other missionaries were flocking in.... Every denomination that will enter this land can get a free farm of three thousand acres... It is a country toward which all eyes are being turned, and the openings that are being made seemed like a light that was going before them, which they

must follow with the truth.”—*General Conference Bulletin*, 1893, p. 269.

February 28 (Question “B”) Resolution On Tax Exemption Introduced From Committee On Resolutions: [142]

“Whereas, In view of the separation which we believe should exist between the Church and the State, it is inconsistent for the Church to receive from the State pecuniary gifts, favors, or exemptions, on religious grounds; therefore,

“36. *Resolved*, That we repudiate the doctrine that Church, or other ecclesiastical property should be exempt from taxation; and, therefore, further,

“37. *Resolved*, That henceforth we decline to accept such exemptions on our own behalf.”—*GCB*, p. 437.

March 1, Resolution Considered And Preamble Amended.

“Resolution 35, the one in regard to the exemption of church or other ecclesiastical property from taxation, called out remarks from several.

“A. F. Ballenger called attention to the fact that the preamble stated that according to our belief in the separation of Church and State, it is inconsistent for the Church to receive from the State pecuniary gifts, favors, or exemptions ‘on religious grounds,’ whereas it is inconsistent for the Church to receive such gifts, favors, or exemptions on *any* ground. Upon motion these words were stricken from the preamble.

“While this resolution was still under discussion, the noon hour having passed, Conference adjourned to March 2, at 10:00, A.M.”—*General Conference Bulletin* 1893, p. 444.

March 2. Resolutions Discussed And Referred Back.

“The meeting opened business on Resolutions 36 and 37 on which action was pending at adjournment.

“Further discussed by A. T. Jones and A. R. Henry. [143]

“W. W. Prescott moved to amend the 37th resolution by omitting the word ‘henceforth’ and adding the words ‘place ourselves on record as declining’ after the word ‘we’ in first line.

“Supported by D. H. Oberholtzer and discussed by delegates Lane, Underwood, Tait, and Breed.

“A. R. Henry moved the following as an amendment to the amendment:—

“Whereas, We hold it to be inconsistent with the true relation which should exist between the Church and State, for the State to bestow upon the Church pecuniary gifts, favors, or exemptions: and

“Whereas, There are in many States laws exempting church property from taxation; therefore

“Resolved, That we labor, so far as in our power, to secure the repeal of all such laws.

“Supported by R. A. Underwood.

“Discussed by delegates Bollman and Eldridge.

“Moved by W. B. White to refer back to committee. Carried.”—*General Conference Bulletin* 1893, p. 458.

March 3, The New Resolution Presented.

“Whereas, A better understanding of the principles of religious liberty is necessary, both for adequate appreciation of their importance, and an intelligent promulgation of them, therefore,

“47. Resolved, That we recommend to the several Conferences the holding of workers institutes for the study of religious liberty subjects, and that we will aid in such institutes as far as possible by furnishing instructors when so requested.

[144] “Whereas, In view of the separation which we believe should exist between the Church and the State, it is inconsistent for the Church to receive from the State pecuniary gifts, favors, or exemptions, on religious grounds, therefore,

“48. Resolved, That we repudiate the doctrine that Church or other ecclesiastical property should be exempt from taxation, and, further,

“49. Resolved, That we use our influence in securing the repeal of such legislation as grants this exemption.”—*GCB* 1893, p. 475. *March 5 (A.M.), The Resolution Adopted (Question “B”).*

“G. A. Irwin then moved the adoption of the report of the Committee on Resolutions, page 475 of the Bulletin, by voting on each separately....(Resolution 48)

“The words ‘on religious grounds’ occurring in the preamble to the 48th resolution, appeared by a mistake, and were stricken out by the Committee. (See [Church and Sabbath School Bulletin](#), 444.)

“A. T. Jones moved the following as an amendment to the 49th resolution:—

“Resolved, That we decidedly protest against any such exemption....

“Carried.

“The amendment as amended then carried, and resolution as amended was adopted.”—*GCB*, 1893, page 484.

March 5 (A.M.), Conference Tax Exemption Action Creates Immediate Problem.

“On motion of J. H. Durland, the Conference adjourned, but before it was dismissed, A. R. Henry, who was out of the room at the time of adjournment, having an official matter to present, the Chair called a meeting of the Conference at once and gave opportunity for the hearing of the special business.

“The point in Brother Henry’s remarks was this: that our State representative from Battle Creek at the State Capital, who at the instance of trustees of several of our institutions, is working to obtain for them freedom from taxation for several of these institutions, is at a loss to know how to proceed or what to do, on account of the recent position by our people on this question. (See [Church and Sabbath School Bulletin](#), 475.) He and our attorney desire immediate instruction, and the attorney would like to meet a committee in regard to the matter, at the close of the meeting. [145]

“Voted that the Chair appoint a committee of five, to formulate a response to the foregoing, to be reported back to the General Conference for acceptance, before submitting to our representative at Lansing.

“Carried.

“The Chair named as this committee, W. W. Prescott, A. R. Henry, U. Smith, A. T. Jones; G. C. Tenney.”—*GCB* 1893, page 484.

March 3, (Question “A”) Plans For Mission In Mashonaland, Africa.

“W. S. Hyatt then rendered a further report for the Committee on Distribution of Labor, as follows:—

“We recommend,....

“36. That a mission be opened in Mashonaland, Africa, as soon as practicable; and that not less than five persons be selected by the Foreign Mission Board to go to that field.”—*GCB* 1893, page 476.

March 5 (P.M.), (Relation Of Questions “A” And “B”) Comment On March 3, Resolution.

“The whole report [of Committee on Distribution of Labor] was thus adopted item by item....

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“By request, P. J. D. Wessels stated in connection with resolution 36 [from Committee on Distribution of Labor (Question “A”)] that though 6000 acres of land were offered to any denomination who would inaugurate a mission, and that we expected to accept land for our mission, it was not from the Government that we looked for the gratuity, but from a company.”—*GCB* 1893, page 486.

March 5 (P.M.), (Question “B”) Report Of Special Committee On Tax Exemption Problems.

“The following report from the Special Committee appointed at the morning meeting was given by Prof. Prescott:—

“*Whereas*, This Conference has clearly stated its position on the taxation of Church and other ecclesiastical property, and

“*Whereas*, There are certain institutions incorporated under the laws of the State which occupy confessedly disputed grounds, therefore,

“*Resolved*, That matters in which the taxation of such institutions as do occupy this disputed territory is involved—orphans, houses for aged persons, hospitals, etc.—we leave to the action of the Legislature, without any protest against their taxation, or any request for exemption.”—*GCB* 1893, page 486.

March 6, Special Committee Report Adopted, After Attempt To Table.

“It was *moved* by F. M. Roberts to adopt the report of Special Committee [on taxation of church property] on page 486 of *Bulletin*.

“Discussed by delegates Shultz, Bollman, Prescott, Eldridge and McCoy.

“*Moved* by I. H. Evans to lay on the table.

“Supported by J. O. Corliss.

“Lost.

“Further discussed by A. T. Jones, Colcord and Bollman.

“Previous question was called and affirmed by vote.

“The resolution was then adopted with two dissenting votes.”—*GCB* 1893, page 491.

Correspondence Relating To The Question Of The South African Land Grant

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October, 1893. Offer Of Free Land Withdrawn.

In October of 1893, Elder O. A. Olsen, President of the General Conference, arrived in South Africa. In a letter written from there to the Foreign Mission Board in November, he reported that there was no longer any free land to be gotten, that the British South African Company were no longer giving free grants to any denomination.

12,000 Acres as a Special Gift. In the latter part of 1893, Elder A. T. Robinson secured an interview with Cecil Rhodes, premier of Cape Colony, and head of the British South African Land Company, operating in Mashonaland. Rhodes was especially pleased with the plan outlined for operating a mission among the natives of that country, and handed to Elder Robinson a sealed letter addressed to Dr. Jameson, Secretary of the Company, to be handed to him in Bulawayo. The brethren had expected to purchase land, and did not know till Jameson told them that Rhodes had ordered him to give them all the land they wanted. 12,000 acres were selected, and became the site of the Solusi Mission, the first one operated by the denomination among the heathen. The Foreign Mission Board set about to find personell to man this new mission enterprise.

August 17, 1894. African Land—F. M. Wilcox. Foreign Mission Board. Secretary Reports.

“I am sorry that the work of our Board during the last few weeks has been somewhat retarded. It is pretty slow work with the President away in Europe and several of the other members of the Board away....

“This was true with reference to Mashonaland....

“So, so far as that field is concerned, we have not yet been able to find any one whom we have thought best to recommend to go. The last report I heard from the company who were on their way there was dated July 5, from Bulawayo, Matabeleland. The company were well and of good courage, and they had met with no accident or mishap. Dr. Jameson, the Governor, was called upon at that place, and talked very favorably of giving to our work twelve thousand acres of land, six thousand at Bulawayo, and six thousand near Fort Salisbury. However, he would want to give this land on conditions

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that we make the work self-supporting, employing native labor, and teaching then useful arts. He understands very fully the object of our work there, and that we propose to evangelize the natives to what we believe to be the truth for this time; but he does not seem to have any religious prejudices against our work.”—(F. M. Wilcox to W. C. White, Aug. 17, 1894.)

*November 1. American Sentinel*¹ *Comments on British South African Company.*

“Some weeks ago, in calling attention to the grant of an alley in Washington, D.C., to a Roman Catholic institution, we said:—

“‘The *Sentinel* has protested, and, will continue to protest, against all such donations, whether of land or of money, and whether made by the Government of the United States or by the Governor of Mashonaland; for if the principle is worth anything, it is just as good in the wilds of Africa as on the plains of our own fair West or in the alleys of our Capital City.’

[149] “At the time we had in mind certain grants of land made in Africa for mission purposes by the British South African Company. It was thought and urged by some that these grants were legitimate because made by a company. But we now have in our possession the annual reports of said company from 1890 to 1893, inclusive, and are in a position to prove conclusively, that the British South African Company is nothing less than a British Colonial government, and that grants of land from it differ in no sense from similar grants from any other civil government.”—*American Sentinel*, Nov. 1, 1894.

November 8 1894. South African Land Accepted For General Conference—

President O. A. Olsen Not Clear.

“I would like to have time to write at some length on the situation in Africa both at Capetown and also up in Zambesia, or what has been known as Mashonaland and Matabeleland. Brn. Haskell and Sisley are both in Africa at the present time. I have been expecting to hear from there for some time but have not done so. I expect that they are busy in their annual meeting....

“Brn. Druillard and Peter Wessels that went to look up the matter of location for a Mission in that country selected a farm for the. Gen.

¹A. T. Jones, Editor.

Conf. as a missionary farm. The Charter Co. made a donation of this farm to the General Conf. on the condition that we go on and cultivate it and help the natives. I have noticed that the *American Sentinel* has taken the position that this is all wrong. That is that it is not right for us or any one else to receive any such favor from this Company. I have not given this matter much thought. It may be that they are right. Sometimes I begin to think, that there may be a possibility that we will go too far in some things.” (O. A. Olsen to W. C. White, Nov. 8, 1894.)

November 22. Editor of American Sentinel Comments Further.

“The gospel of National Reform, the gospel of force, is being carried into the newly opened portions of Africa by the missionaries that have followed closely upon the heels of the troops of the British South African Company, to which was committed the conquest of Matabeleland and Mashonaland. First, the so-called company, which is in fact the colonial government of that part of Africa, despoiled the natives of their territory by force and fraud, and then doled out grants of land to the missionaries as a speculative investment, the returns to be made in ‘influence’ in civilizing the natives. How the missionaries who have thus sold themselves for a mess of African pottage will succeed in serving two masters, remains to be seen; though, in view of our Lord’s declaration that it cannot be done, the issue can scarcely be considered doubtful”—*American Sentinel*, Nov. 22, 1894.

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December 4. Foreign Mission Board Finds South African Land Grant A Perplexing Question.

(F. M. Wilcox to W. C. White)

“There is one question about which I have been thinking considerably of late and that is this: what should be our relation to the various governments with which we will come in contact in our labor in foreign fields? We have contended very earnestly against anything looking toward a union of church and state, and even went so far at our last General Conference that we protested against exemption clauses and against exemption of church property from taxation.

“Now I do not suppose that there will ever come a time in this country when we could secure state favors if we desired, but may it not be possible that the Lord will test us right upon some of these principles in our work in other places, especially as we come

in contact with some of these petty governments of Africa or the islands of the sea? They are just as much civil governments as the greater powers of earth. From them, in a great many cases, we will be offered a great many favors. What relation should we sustain on some of these points?

[151] “You know the British South Africa Land Company has offered us 12,000 acres of land. The question naturally arises, will it be a compromise of principles to accept this? The matter has been talked over considerably outside of the regular meetings of the Board; and although the question has never come up for action, I think that the majority of the Board feel that it would be better to go through a form of purchase, at least, and thus obviate any difficulty which might arise in this respect.” (F. M. Wilcox to W. C. White, Dec. 4, 1894.)

December 9, The President Of The General Conference Writes A. T. Robinson.

“Now in regard to the land. The opinion prevails among the brethren here that it would be best to buy the land, ... though we greatly appreciate the kindly attitude of the Chartered Company, and want to reciprocate their interest in every way possible,”—Letter of O. A. Olsen to A. T. Robinson, Dec. 9, 1894.

December 20. S. N. Haskell On The Ground In Africa, Explains The Deal. ²

“I have supposed from your standpoint over in America we over here are in the wrong in taking the land. But I think one position we have taken is a sound one nevertheless. (1) The land is stolen from the natives. (2) It is on the consideration we let them remain on the land and educate them to work that we take the land. Therefore we pay them for land in doing what they wish us to do, and that happens

²“In the days when colonialism was a young and respectable word, Empire Builder Cecil Rhodes dispatched small bands of his agents into the wilds of Africa to make treaties with entire tribes. In 1890 the agents struck a shrewd bargain. In return for 2,000 pounds sterling a year and the ‘protection’ of the British crown, King Lewanika of Barotseland granted Rhodes a monopoly of the natural resources of his kingdom. As it turned out, the king’s domain covered quite a bit of territory, and under charter from Queen Victoria, Rhodes directed his newly formed British South Africa Co. to exploit, explore and settle thousands of square miles of south and central Africa... “Not until after 1924, when the British Colonial office took over control of the colony and the expense of running it, did Chartered begin to reap stable financial rewards.”—Time, October 9, 1964

to be just what we want to do. Is not that the same principle almost every bargain is made? (3) It is not public money we take or any land that has been purchased by public money, but it is land that was taken from them (the natives) in war of a company not a government,³ but those who wish to form a colony under the British Government. But financially, they refused the offer from the home government, so the financial interests might be theirs and they financially be enriched by the transaction and then after the company has enriched itself, establish a colony and it enrich the home government. (4) They, this Company, consider they have made a good trade when they engage any religious society to enter upon a scheme to educate the natives to work and live in the country rather than drive them off and simply turn all their efforts to enrich themselves the same as others do who have SELFISH ends alone in view. (5) We being anxious to educate this very class of people with the truth gladly accept the proposition and enter into the arrangement agreeing to let the original land owner to live on the land, and instruct him in civilization.”—S. N. Haskell to F. M. Wilcox (Secy. FMB), Dec. 20, 1894.

January 1, 1895. S. N. Haskell Protests Jibes in The American Sentinel.

28 Roeland Street,
Cape Town, South Africa
Jan. 1, 1895.

Dear Brother Olsen:—

This morning I sent you a letter and since I mailed that the *Sentinel* of Nov. 22 has come to hand and on the last page I find some remark which appears to me rather unchristian in its nature. Now what I write is on the supposition it has reference to the Seventh-day Adventists of South Africa. It is true that no name is called but I judge so from the correspondence we have had, and from the position taken by us and by the Foreign Missionary Board in the U. S. A.

“Now laying aside ALL questions of whether the brethren have done the right thing or not in taking the land, I wish to inquire if

³Note: Looking back 70 years Time Magazine comments on the South Africa Land Company: (See next page)

that is of a Christian spirit or not? Brother Wilcox kindly sent me a letter of Brother Bowman and I took pains to make inquiry about the matter and then wrote a letter in reply giving what I supposed a Bible view of the matter, also tried to show how these circumstances varied from government grants, etc.

“There has been two other flings in the paper. But instead of writing a word back and showing, or trying to show wherein we made a mistake from the Bible or otherwise then comes out a fling, and a charge of our taking the land by force, etc. This is made on the ground of our taking the land as a gift to give back to the natives although it is stated to have an influence. And then to make it appear more ridiculous, give a misspelled word and holding it up to public view in our leading paper on Religious Liberty. Do the brethren think that will serve a unity of feeling and faith? Do our brethren think this is answering the Saviour’s prayer as He prayed for the oneness among the disciples as He and the Father is one?

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“I do not wish in any way to throw back on our brethren any reflections but wish to say they had better come over into this country and view things from an English standpoint. And further, I think it would be a good plan to come into a conference and try to unite the element over here who already bring charges against our brethren in America. Some of them I fear they have some grounds for, and much they have no grounds for...

“The editor of the *Sentinel* [A. T. Jones] is held up by Sister White and others so his influence is sustained by our brethren all over the field. And now is it right to use that influence in that way? Personally of course it does not affect me. But it does affect our work here. Such language does not at all appear to me to bear the marks of Christ.

“Of course I do not believe a word of the paragraph, as it is applied to us in our work.... We shall have to vindicate our brethren here until we see some argument of a different nature than appears in that paper. We cannot say the article is Christian or gentlemanly.

“We have elements over here rather of a different character than the Americans. Should we deal in such language as is sometimes used in the *Sentinel* and as it is used in some of the speeches in America, our work would be brought into the greatest straits in

a very short time. And to use such language and apply it to our brethren it creates a wound that is not easy to heal.

“I have no new argument to bring, and had I an argument I should not argue one word against such a spirit as is manifested in that article.

“We are in the midst of our conference and we are trying to get our position before the public in the papers outside. And I hope in the Lord that He will paralyze the influence of such an article on the minds of certain ones who profess our faith, and our enemies. So they will not find out we are in what would appear to be a quarrel among ourselves. I sometimes wish some of our American brethren could see the effect of some of their unguarded speeches in these foreign fields. If this was the only thing that had been said, perhaps it would not have had the effect. I never labored harder to retain the confidence of our African brethren in our American brethren and get them converted. This does not help much.”—S. N. Haskell.

January 1, 1895. S. N. Haskell Asks: Does Ellen White⁴ Have Light For Them?

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“Claremont College,
Claremont, South Africa.
Jan. 1, 1895.

“Dear Brother White:—

“I enclose you in this a letter I have just sent to America. This morning I mailed one to you and one to him. In the one I sent to you I sent a copy of the one I sent to him. In this I send another copy which speaks for itself. I am now glad that I have sent you my correspondence on the land question which we have had.... But it is not very encouraging to find such words in our *Sentinel*, especially with the elements we find over here.

“I hope you will call your mother’s attention to the position we have taken and see if she has any light on the subject—if in taking that land have we violated any principle of the gospel? I write this to you without making any allusion to it to her. Now I write this so you can have how it is and how it will be looked upon at this end of

⁴This matter was presented to Mrs. White in Australia on January 30, 1895, and she replied in a 14-page letter to S. N. Haskell as presented on pages 165 to 176

the line.... Such articles do not help the cause any over here. But the main question is, are we right in it or are we not? If we know what the right is, we shall fight it out on that line and that line alone....

[156] “You have the matter before you and now if you do not object I wish that you would read to her copies of the letters which I have sent you or in some way get it before her mind so we can know her mind on the matter.

“I write this in great haste...

“In hope, (Signed) “S. N. Haskell”

Land Grant Considered By 1895 General Conference—(February 15-March 15)

February 20, 1895, Resolution Introduced.

“The Chairman of the Committee on Resolutions submitted the following additional report:—

“Your Committee on Resolutions would respectfully submit the following:

“*Whereas*, Opportunities have arisen and doubtless will arise in the future to secure from various civil governments grants and donations, and,—

“*Whereas*, To seek or even to accept any such thing from any civil government in any country would be a violation of the fundamental principles of separation of Church and State, therefore,—

[157] “11. *Resolved*, That we ought not as a denomination either to seek or accept from any civil government, chief, ruler, or royal chartered company, supreme, local, or otherwise, any gift or donation, concession or grant, either of land, money, credit, special privilege, or other thing of value, to which we are not in common with all others justly entitled as men without any reference to our religious profession or religious work. This does not preclude the receiving of aid from rulers, royal personages, or private individuals when such assistance is rendered by these parties in their individual capacities.

“12. *Resolved*, That in harmony with this resolution, the General Conference Association be instructed to pay an equivalent for all government land that may be secured in Africa or elsewhere.”—*GCB* 1895, p. 283.

February 24,—The Resolution Discussed.

“The committees having no further reports to submit, the Chair announced the order of business to be the pending motion to adopt Resolution 11, page 283.

“Elder A. T. Jones took the floor. The speaker contended that our position on the entire separation of Church and State should be without a conditional ‘but’—it should be a clear and decided one. All these resolutions implied doubts and a disposition to compromise. The circumstances of Israel in Medo-Persia and Babylon had been referred to, but did not illustrate the case, since the people were then in captivity, and under the power of a hostile nation. We should look for primitive principles. Christ in His discussion of principles pointed them back to the beginning. Divorces and polygamy were allowed, but in the beginning ‘it was not so.’ Had Israel not forsaken God, the books of Esther and Nehemiah would not have been written. The speaker reviewed at some length the circumstances in which we are at present placed.

“D. H. Lamson remarked that though there was something peculiar in the circumstances of Israel as depicted in Nehemiah and Ezra, still there were features of their relation to the civil power which he could not explain on the ground of entire separation from the state.

“Wm. Healey said that the circumstances of Israel in captivity [158] were not applicable to the question, because the favors that the king bestowed upon them were simply the restoration of the rights which had been forcibly taken from them. If a government were to bring a general persecution upon a religious community, and carry away the people in captivity, and after some years a new administration should come in, which would restore the people to their original condition, there would be nothing in accepting that restoration which would compromise the relation of that church to the State. However, the speaker thought that the resolution might be somewhat improved, and moved to strike out the words ‘chief, ruler, or royal chartered company.’

“J. M. Rees seconded this motion, and it was carried without discussion.

“The resolution as it then stood was discussed by A. T. Jones, R. C. Porter, D. T. Jones, C. P. Bollman, and W. W. Prescott. The question was called for. The latter speaker remarked that the

passage or value of the present resolution was of comparatively small importance compared with its benefit as an educator. He therefore trusted that the discussion would be allowed to proceed, and that questions would be freely asked and answered. The original commission of Christ to the disciples was given when there was but one government in the world, and that government was totally opposed to the gospel, and those who carried it must do so under the penalty of death or the confiscation of property. But they went forth asking no special privileges or immunities from the government.

[159] “G. E. Fifield, Wm. Healey, W. W. Prescott, S. H. Lane, A. T. Jones, O. A. Johnson, D. T. Jones, R. A. Underwood, and C. P. Bollman participated in the discussion that followed. The latter moved to strike out the words ‘private individual,’ and the motion was seconded by W. D. Curtis. This motion was spoken to by L. H. Crisler, D. T. Jones, and others. Carried.

“D. T. Jones then moved, and S. H. Lane seconded, to strike out the words ‘credits’ and ‘special privilege.’ This motion was spoken to by L. D. Santee, A. T. Jones, D. H. Lamson, W. W. Prescott, D. T. Jones.

“The period of the meeting having expired, the motion to adjourn was carried....

“The discussion of the resolution was animated and instructive. There was no clashing of sentiment, nor of personal feelings, and much that was helpful was brought out, and all felt that the meeting had been a profitable one, and were able to see the issue before us much clearer than before.”—*GCB* 1895, pp. 340-41.

No Action Recorded.

(*Note: The General Conference Bulletin fails to record any action adopting the resolution.—A. L. White.*)

February 26. O. A. Olsen Reports On The Discussion Of South African Land

Question at Two Meetings at 1895 Session. (O. A. Olsen to W. C. White)

“I enclose with this letter some extracts from a letter I have lately received from Eld. Haskell, and also a copy of a letter which Eld. Jones has sent him in reply. You will see that they relate to the mission farm in Matabeleland. Bro. Jones has himself received a letter from Bro. Haskell, and also one from Sr. Druillard, in which

the subject is quite fully discussed. It is very likely that you already have copies of these letters, but I do not know. If I had access to the letter of Sr. Druillard, I would send you a copy of that; for I want you to understand the whole situation.

“It has been the mind of the Foreign Mission Board from the first to pay for the land; but when our brethren went up there, and it was offered to them so freely, they thought it right to accept of it, and then on their return to Cape Town, Elder Haskell took the same view of the matter as they did. I wrote Bro. Haskell quite freely the mind of the F.M.B. with reference to paying for the land, and now I send you a copy of his reply. You will notice that he treats the idea of paying for the land with considerable lightness.

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“Now the question has also been before the General Conference as you will see by the *Bulletin*, though the whole discussion does not appear, of course. Nearly two meetings of the Conference were taken up in talking the matter over, and bringing out important thoughts in connection with the subject of the union of church and state, etc. I am glad to say that the discussion was carried on in a dignified manner, and while it occupied a much longer time than I had expected, I am not sorry, because it was very instructive, and I believe that the principles brought out will be helpful to all who were present. I hope that our brethren in S. Africa will properly relate themselves to the situation, so that unfavorable complications may be avoided.”—(O. A. Olsen to W. C. White, Feb. 26, 1895.)
March 17, Mission Board Acts To Purchase Land In South Africa.
“Work in Zambesia.

“3. That the following propositions be adopted for the guidance of our work in Zambesia:—

“1. That the work shall be under the direction and control of the Foreign Mission Board of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

“2. That the land secured from the government shall be purchased and not received as a grant.

“3. That we express it as our judgment that no more land should be purchased than is necessary for practical purposes in connection with mission work.

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“4. That a letter be written to Messrs. Rhodes and Jamison, representing the British South Africa Land Company, expressing our

appreciation as a Board for the favors offered us, and also our desire to so conduct ourselves and our work that we may always have their perfect cooperation; but that we do not feel free to accept of the land as a gift, but will pay them a price that they and our agent may agree upon, feeling that this will be more satisfactory to them and also to ourselves, leaving us more free to go forward and carry out the plans of missionary work that we have arranged for.”—Minutes Foreign Mission Board, March 17, 1895. Present: O. A. Olsen, J. N. Loughborough, U. Smith, J. H. Morrison, A. O. Tait, W. W. Prescott, G. C. Tenney, A. R. Henry, J. H. Durland, L. McCoy, and F. M. Wilcox.

March 28. The Ellen G. White Testimony⁵ Reaches Battle Creek. (O. A. Olsen to W. C. White)

“Now with reference to the business connected with the General Conference: as you have the *Bulletin*, and will look that over, you will follow the business transactions from day to day; also the devotional meetings and the Bible studies. I think: that the business proceedings were given more fully in the last *Bulletin* than at any time before. The business passed off quite nicely, and quite satisfactorily in a general way. We had many evidences of the Lord’s blessing and presence....

[162] “Since receiving the last mail from Australia, and reading the many communications sent by your mother, I see some things in a clearer light than I have viewed them before. Only yesterday I finished reading those communications; and I am more thankful than I can express, with reference to the instruction she has given, and the light she has thrown, on certain matters connected with the religious liberty movement. I have been greatly burdened all the year over the way some things have taken shape in that line. I have spoken to, and warned some of our brethren at different times; but from the fact that, with a multitude of matters that necessarily come to me to look after, I have not been able to follow along and give all these matters the careful study that others have done, therefore I am not so well posted on every question as I ought to be.”...

“I have felt bad over what has seemed to me to be extreme positions taken on various questions. During the Conference I felt

⁵The E. G. White January 30 letter to S. N. Haskell

very sorry for the resolution that was brought in concerning the Matabeleland question, etc. I had not seen the resolution until it was read on the floor. It went through me at first with a shock. I did what I could to assist in modifying the terms of the expression, but that was all that it amounted to. If we had had the instruction that came to us in the last mail from Australia, many things that were said would not have been said, and the resolution, if offered, would have been of an entirely different nature. Well, it shows me more and more that I can not place any dependence upon any man or set of men; it makes no difference who they are or where they are.

“But while this is so, it greatly increases the responsibilities of the one who stands in the position that I do, and in view of these things, I feel, many times, as though I would sink in the earth. My only comfort is in the thought that the work is the Lord’s; and I am glad that that is so. He has had it in charge all these years until now, and He will still have it in charge. In the past He has many times overruled our mistakes because we did it ignorantly. I hope He will still do so; for otherwise we should be in a most trying position.”—(O.A. Olsen to W.C. White, [Maranatha](#), 28, 1895.)

March 29,—Further Mission Board Action.

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“6. That as much land as is necessary for practical mission purposes be secured by the superintendent of the Mission of the British South Africa Land Company on such conditions as may be agreed upon, providing such conditions comport with sound business principles, and do not in any way compromise our work as a denomination.

“7. That this land thus secured shall be worked and used wholly for the interests of the general mission and not for personal advantage.

“8. That the natives living on the same shall not be dispossessed or driven off, but allowed to live peaceably in the enjoyment of their legitimate pursuits....

“The question was raised as to the amount of means to be invested in the enterprise for the first year. After some consideration, it was

“VOTED, That five thousand dollars be the limit of the expenses for the first year; this to include the wages paid to laborers, but not

the expense connected with the purchase of the land, ⁶ in case it should be deemed necessary to secure it in this way.”—(Minutes Foreign Mission Board, [Maranatha, 29, 1895.](#))

[164] **The Messenger Of The Lord Speaks Out On Tax Exemption
 and Grants and Favors**

(Note: The letter from S. N. Haskell to W. C. White written January 1 from Claremont (Capetown) South Africa enquiring if Ellen G. White had light on the question of the acceptance of the land in Mashonaland, was received in Australia on January 30, 1895. It, with other letters relating to this matter, was read to Mrs. White that day. Before the day closed she began a 14-page communication which after several interruptions she completed the next day. This was addressed to Elder Haskell, but like so many of her communications giving counsel on important phases of the work, she intended it for the eyes of others as well.

The first half of the letter deals with the question of unkind and sharp thrusts in our papers. (See pp. 148-9 and 150.) The last seven pages are devoted to the question of the land grant and sweep back to the 1893 discussion and actions on tax exemption.

A copy of this testimony was sent to Elder O. A. Olsen, president of the General Conference and reached him in Battle Creek in late March, some two or three weeks after the close of the General Conference session. He makes mention of this in his letter to W. C. White bearing date of March 28. The actions taken by the Foreign Mission Board on March 29 reflect the tempering influence of this testimony. (See p. 163.)

Elder Olsen on July 2, 1895, published a number of communications from Ellen G. White in a 62-page pamphlet entitled *Special Instruction to Ministers and Workers* Number 3. The entire January 30-31 letter to Elder Haskell, except for two or three paragraphs of a local or personal character, was published in pages 24-35 of this pamphlet. Elder Olsen divided the material into three parts, giving these the titles (1) “Christian Courtesy,” (2) “Receiving Gifts,” and (3) “Solemn Times.” The last two of these were included in *Testi-*

⁶Note: No further mention is made of purchasing the land. It was received as a gift

monies to Ministers, published in 1923: “Receiving Gifts” on pages 197-200; and “Solemn Times” on pages 200-203.

At some time subsequent to sending this testimony to Battle Creek Mrs. White, it would appear, reread it, and at that time inscribed with her pen on the file copy certain interlineations. These seem to add a touch of color and emphasis significant to the statement as a whole. The White Trustees consider that these should come to the attention of the committee for which this compilation is prepared.

The testimony dealing with tax exemption and grants and favors is presented now from published sources with the interlineations added in parenthesis. Some paragraphs in the first published record not relevant to tax exemption and grants and favors are not included.—A. L. White)

The Message From Mrs. White ⁷

[165]

Granville, N.S.W.,
Australia.
Jan. 30, 1895.

“Dear Brother [Haskell]—

“We have just received letters from you, and Willie has just read them to Brother Sisley and myself. I regard your reasoning and statements as correct. I am very much pained as I see how readily those who write for our papers make unkind thrusts and allusions that will certainly do harm, and that will hedge up the way, and hinder us from doing the work that we should to reach all classes, the Catholics included. It is our work to speak the truth in love, and not to mix in with the truth the unsanctified elements of the natural heart, and speak things that savor of the same spirit possessed by our enemies.

“All sharp thrusts will come back upon us in double measure when the power is in the hands of those who can exercise it for our injury. Over and over the message has been given to me that we are not to say one word, not to publish one sentence, unless positively essential in vindicating the truth, that will stir up our enemies against

⁷Ellen G. White [Letter 11, 1895](#)

us, and arouse their passions to a white heat. Our work will soon be closed up, and soon the time of trouble such as there never was will come upon us, of which we have but little idea.

[166] “Writers and speakers among us will have to learn that the highest obligations of the Christian life involve the giving of careful attention in heeding the messages that God has sent to us. It is essential that we have a knowledge of our own motives and actions in order to have constant self-improvement. I long to see men in responsible positions feeling the burden in regard to themselves, so that they will exercise Christian politeness, and speak and write in a courteous manner. The Lord wants His workers to represent Him, the great missionary worker. The manifestation of zeal and rashness always does harm. The proprieties essential for Christian life must be learned daily in the school of Christ. He who is careless and heedless in uttering words or in writing words for publications to be sent broadcast into the world, is disqualifying himself to be entrusted with the sacred work which devolves upon Christ’s followers at this time. Those who practice giving hard thrusts are forming habits that will have to be repented of. To discharge every duty that devolves upon those who are intrusted with sacred responsibility in the right manner, calls for humble prayer, and a close study of the life of Christ.

“A surgeon, a physician, a teacher, a guide, needs to study carefully and attentively the way in which to do the work which is entrusted to his hands, and how much more should those who are entrusted with the sacred responsibility to watch for souls as they that must give an account, study to work in harmony with the truth, and in accordance with the wisdom which is from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy, and ‘the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.’

“I am pained when I see the sharp thrusts which appear in the *Sentinel*. I speak to my brethren who are communicating with the people through that paper: It is best for you to be as wise as serpents, and as harmless as doves. We should carefully and severally examine our ways and our spirits, and see in what manner we are doing the work given us of God, which involves the destiny of souls. The very highest obligation is resting upon us....

Receiving Gifts

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Jan. 30, 1895

“Your letter only came today, and at a time when a number were about to leave our house to take passage on a steamer from Sydney to New Zealand.

“You enquire with respect to the propriety of receiving gifts from Gentiles or the heathen. The question is not strange; but I would ask you who is it that owns our world? Who are the real owners of houses and lands? Is it not God? He has an abundance in our world which He has placed in the hands of men by which the hungry might be supplied with food, the naked with clothing, the homeless with homes. The Lord would move upon worldly men, even idolaters, to give of their abundance for the support of the work, if we would approach them wisely, and give them an opportunity of doing those things which it is their privilege to do. What they would give we should be privileged to receive.

“We should become acquainted with men in high places, and by exercising the wisdom of the serpent, and the harmlessness of the dove, we might obtain advantage from them, for God would move upon their minds to do many things in behalf of His people. If proper persons would set before those who have means and influence, the needs of the work of God in a proper light, these men might do much to advance the cause of God in our world. We have put away from us privileges and advantages that we might have had the benefit of, because we chose to stand independent of the world. But we need not sacrifice one principle of truth while taking advantage of every opportunity to advance the cause of God.

“The Lord would have His people in the world, but not of the world. They should seek to bring the truth before the men in high places, and give them a fair chance to receive and weigh evidence. There are many who are unenlightened and uninformed, and as individuals we have a serious, solemn, wise work to do. We are to have travail of soul for those who are in high places, and go to them with the gracious invitation to come to the marriage feast. Very much more might have been done than has been done for those in high places. The last message that Christ gave to His disciples before He was parted from them, and taken up into heaven, was a

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message to carry the gospel to all the world, and was accompanied by the promise of the Holy Spirit. The Lord said, 'Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria and to the uttermost part of the earth.'

"'The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof.' 'The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts.' 'Every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee; for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof.' ...

"The Lord would have us in possession of the Spirit of heavenly wisdom. Are we all being impressed to pray to the Lord humbly and earnestly as our necessities require, importuning Him for the spirit of wisdom? Do we pray, saying, 'Show me the secrets of wisdom, that which I know not teach thou me'? O for humble, earnest prayer to go forth from unfeigned lips praying for the counsel that is of God. He says, 'Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom.'

Solemn Times

Jan. 31, 1895

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"Solemn, serious times are upon us, and perplexities will increase, to the very close of time. There may be a little respite in these matters, but it will not be for long. I have letters to write that must go in the next mail to Battle Creek. Our brethren there are not looking at everything in the right light. The movements they have made to pay taxes on the property of the Sanitarium and Tabernacle have manifested a zeal and conscientiousness that in all respects is not wise nor correct. Their ideas of religious liberty are being woven with suggestions that do not come from the Holy Spirit, and the religious liberty cause is sickening, and its sickness can only be healed by the grace and gentleness of Christ.

"The hearts of those who advocate this cause must be filled by the Spirit of Jesus. The Great Physician alone can apply the balm of Gilead. Let these men read the book of Nehemiah with humble hearts, touched by the Holy Spirit, and their false ideas will be modified, and correct principles will be seen, and the present order

of things will be changed. Nehemiah prayed to God for help, and God heard his prayer. The Lord moved upon heathen kings to come to his help. When his enemies zealously worked against him, the Lord worked through kings to carry out His purpose, and to answer the many prayers that were ascending to Him for the help which they so much needed.

Extreme Positions

“I am often greatly distressed when I see our leading men taking extreme positions, and burdening themselves over matters that should not be taken up or worried over, but left in the hands of God for Him to adjust. We are yet in the world, and God keeps for us a place in connection with the world, and works by His own right hand to prepare the way before us, in order that His work may progress along its various lines. The truth is to have a standing-place, and the standard of truth is to be uplifted in many places in regions beyond.

“Be sure that God has not laid upon those who remain away from these foreign fields of labor, the burden of criticising the ones on the ground where the work is being done. (You need not be so zealous to get in the hands of worldly men God’s own money of which they have been robbing Him all their lives.)⁸ Those who are not put on the ground know nothing about the necessities of the situation, and if they cannot say anything to help those who are on the ground, let them not hinder, but show their wisdom by the eloquence of silence, and attend to the work that is close at hand. I protest against the zeal that they manifest that is not according to knowledge, when they ventilate their ideas about foreign fields of labor.

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“Let the Lord work with the men who are on the ground, and let those who are not on the ground walk humbly with God, lest they get out of their place, and lose their bearings. The Lord has not placed the burden of criticising the work upon those who have taken this burden, and He does not give them the sanction of His Holy Spirit. Many move according to their own human judgment, and zealously seek to adjust things that God has not placed in their hands. Just as long as we are in the world, we shall have to do a

⁸Interlineation by E. G. White in file copy

special work for the world, the message of warning is to go to all countries, tongues, and peoples.

[171] “The Lord does not move upon His workers to make them take a course which will bring on the time of trouble before the time. Let them not build up a wall of separation between themselves and the world, by advancing their own ideas and notions. There is now altogether too much of this throughout our borders. The message of warning has not reached large numbers of the world, in the very cities that are right at hand, and to number Israel is not to work after God’s order.

Favors To Be Received As Well As Imparted

“Just as long as we are in this world, and the Spirit of God is striving with the world, we are to receive as well as to impart favors. We are to give to the world the light of truth as presented in the sacred Scriptures, and we are to receive from the world that which God moves upon them to do in behalf of His cause. The Lord still moves upon the hearts of kings and rulers in behalf of His people, and it becomes those who are so deeply interested in the religious liberty question not to cut off any favors, or withdraw themselves from the help that God has moved men to give, for the advancement of His cause.

“We find examples in the word of God concerning this very matter. Cyrus, king of Persia, made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it into writing saying, ‘Thus sayeth Cyrus king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel.’ A second commandment was issued by Darius for the building of the house of the Lord, and is recorded in the sixth chapter of Ezra.

“The Lord God of Israel has placed His goods in the hands of unbelievers, but they are to be used in favor of doing the works that must be done for a fallen world. The agents through whom these gifts come, may open up avenues through which the truth may go, they may have no sympathy with the work, and no faith in Christ,

and no practice in His words; but their gifts are not to be refused on that account. The Holy Spirit strives with hearts of the so-called great men of earth. He is drawing them until they have light and when convicted turn from fables to the light of truth.* [172]

“It is very strange that some of our brethren should feel that it is their duty to bring about a condition of things that would bind up the means that God would have set free. God has not laid upon them the responsibility of coming in conflict with the authorities and powers of the world in this matter. (Their business is not to close up the avenues. Let the Lord work in that line.)* The withstraining hand of God has not yet been withdrawn from the earth. (The four angels are holding the four winds.) Let the leaders in the work bide their time, hide in Christ, and move and work with great wisdom. Let them be as wise as serpents, and as harmless as doves. I have repeatedly been shown that we might receive far more favors than we do in many ways if we would approach men in wisdom, acquaint them with our work, (as though we had a right to expect them to help in the best and greatest enterprises in our world)* and give them an opportunity of doing those things which it is our privilege to induce them to do for the advancement of the work of God.”—[Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, 197-203](#).

*Interlineation by E. G. White in file copy.

The Lord Still Moves On The Hearts Of Kings And Rulers⁹ [173] **Prudence And Forethought**

While Nehemiah implored the help of God, he did not fold his own hands, feeling that he had no more care or responsibility in the bringing about of his purpose to restore Jerusalem. With admirable prudence and forethought he proceeded to make all the arrangements necessary to insure the success of the enterprise. Every movement was marked with great caution. He did not reveal his purpose even to his own countrymen; for while they would rejoice in his success, he feared that, by some indiscretion, they might hinder his work. Some would be liable to manifest exultation that would arouse the jealousy of their enemies, and perhaps cause the defeat of the undertaking.

⁹Ellen G. White article in [The Southern Watchman, March 15, 1904](#)

As his request to the king had been so favorably received, he was encouraged to ask for such assistance as was needed for the carrying out of his plans. To give dignity and authority to his mission, as well as to provide for protection on the journey, he secured a military escort. He obtained royal letters to the governors of the provinces beyond the Euphrates, the territory through which he must pass on his way to Judea; and he obtained, also, a letter to the keeper of the king's forest in the mountains of Lebanon, directing him to furnish such timber as would be needed for the wall of Jerusalem and the buildings that Nehemiah proposed to erect. In order that there might be no occasion for complaint that he had exceeded his commission, Nehemiah was careful to have the authority and privileges accorded him, clearly defined.

Nehemiah's Example A Lesson To Us

[174] The example of this holy man should be a lesson to all the people of God, that they are not only to pray in faith, but to work with diligence and fidelity. How many difficulties we encounter, how often we hinder the working of Providence in our behalf, because prudence, forethought, and painstaking are regarded as having little to do with religion! This is a grave mistake.

It is our duty to cultivate and to exercise every power that will render us more efficient workers for God. Careful consideration and well matured plans are as essential to the success of sacred enterprises today as in the time of Nehemiah. If all who are engaged in the Lord's work would realize how much depends upon their fidelity and wise forethought, far greater prosperity would attend their efforts. Through diffidence and backwardness we often fail of securing that which is attainable as a right, from the powers that be. God will work for us, when we are ready to do what we can and should do on our part.

To Avail Ourselves Of The Help God Prompts Men To Give

Men of prayer should be men of action. Those who are ready and willing, will find ways and means of working. Nehemiah did not

depend upon uncertainties. The means which he lacked he solicited from those who were able to bestow.

The Lord still moves upon the hearts of kings and rulers in behalf of his people. Those who are laboring for him are to avail themselves of the help that he prompts men to give for the advancement of his cause. The agents through whom these gifts come, may open ways by which the light of truth shall be given to many benighted lands. These men may have no sympathy with God's work, no faith in Christ, no acquaintance with his word; but their gifts are not on this account to be refused.

The Lord has placed his goods in the hands of unbelievers as well as believers; all may return to him his own for the doing of the work that must be done for a fallen world. As long as we are in this world, as long as the Spirit of God strives with the children of men, so long are we to receive favors as well as to impart them. We are to give to the world the light of truth, as revealed in the Scriptures; and we are to receive from the world that which God moves upon them to give in behalf of his cause. [175]

The Lord's work might receive far greater favors than it is now receiving, if we would approach men in wisdom, acquainting them with the work, and giving them an opportunity of doing that which it is our privilege to induce them to do for its advancement. If we, as God's servants, would take a wise and prudent course, his good hand would prosper us in our efforts.

Some may question the propriety of receiving gifts from unbelievers. Let such ask themselves: "Who is the real owner of our world? To whom belong its houses and lands, and its treasures of gold and silver?" God has an abundance in our world, and he has placed his goods in the hands of all, both the obedient and the disobedient. He is ready to move upon the hearts of worldly men, even idolaters, to give of their abundance for the support of his work; and he will do this as soon as his people learn to approach these men wisely and to call their attention to that which it is their privilege to do. If the needs of the Lord's work were set forth in a proper light before those who have means and influence, these men might do much to advance the cause of present truth. God's people have lost many privileges of which they could have taken advantage, had they not chosen to stand independent of the world.

In the providence of God, we are daily brought into connection with the unconverted. By his own right hand God is preparing the way before us, in order that his work may progress rapidly. As colaborers with him, we have a sacred, solemn work to do. We are to have travail of soul for those who are in high places; we are to extend to them the gracious invitation to come to the marriage feast.

The Riches Of The World Belong To God

Although now almost wholly in the possession of wicked men, all the world, with its riches and treasures, belongs to God. “The earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof.” “The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts.” “Every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the birds of the mountains; and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee; for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof.” O that Christians might realize more and still more fully that it is their privilege and their duty, while cherishing right principles, to take advantage of every heaven-sent opportunity for advancing God’s kingdom in this world!—Mrs. E. G. White, [The Southern Watchman, March 15, 1904](#). [Quoted largely in [Christian Service, 167-172, 202, 239](#)]

VIII—Miscellaneous Questions Involving Church-State And Other Relationships

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The Bible in the public schools
School attendance on Sabbath
Meeting legal requirements in our medical training
Attitude toward the military draft and military service
Involvement in labor unions
The Work to be done in Washington

The Bible In The Public Schools

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(Portion of a letter to A. T. Jones ¹)

Napier, New Zealand

April 9, 1893

Elder A. T. Jones

Dear Brother:—

“There is a subject which greatly troubles my mind; while I do not see the justice nor right in enforcing by law the bringing of the Bible to be read in the public schools: yet there are some things which burden my mind in regard to our people making prominent their ideas on this point. These things I am sure will place us in a wrong light before the world. Cautions were given me on this point.

“There were some things shown me in reference to the words of Christ, ‘Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s’ ([Matthew 22:21](#)),—placing the matter where the church has no right to enforce anything of a religious character upon the world. Yet in connection with this were given words of caution. If such a law were to go into effect the Lord

¹Note: The balance of this letter deals with the presentation of righteousness by faith by Elder Jones. See [Selected Messages 1:377-379](#)

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would overrule it for good, that an argument should be placed in the hands of those who keep the Sabbath, in their favor, to stand on the Bible foundation in reference to the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. And the book which the state and Christian world have forced upon the notice of the people to be read in the schools, Shall it not speak, and shall not the words be interpreted just as they read?

“My brother, this objecting to the passing of a law to bring the Bible into the schools will work against us, those of our faith who are making so much of the Bible. A year ago there was something presented before me in reference to these things, and we shall have to use the Bible for our evidence to show the foundation of our faith. We should be exceedingly cautious in every particular lest we shut out a single ray of light from those who are in darkness. I remember particularly this point, that anything that should give the knowledge of God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent, should not be obstructed at all. Some things I can not present in distinct lines, but enough is clear to me that I want you to be very careful on what ground you tread, for our enemies will make a decided argument against us if we shall give them a semblance of a chance.

“I think the law-making powers will carry their point in this particular, if not now, a short period ahead. And it is very essential that as a people, we take the greatest care that no provocation be given our enemies which they will make capital of against us as a people, in a future crisis, in the matter of opposing so good a work as the introduction of the Bible into the public schools.

“I wish I could lay my hand on something I wrote on this subject at the last General Conference that I attended. But I can not bring it to light. I hope the Lord will help us to not make one wrong move; but please be cautious in this point.”—Ellen G. White [Letter 44, 1893](#).

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A. T. Jones' Response To Testimony Contributes To The Background

Dallas, Texas

August 14, 1893

“Dear Sister White:

“Your communication—the Testimony—sent in April was received. I am glad to say, I accept it fully, and am thankful that the Lord is so careful of me that He points out dangers, and warns and cautions, to keep me in the right way.... I accept fully all that was sent, and am thankful to God for His tender care, and caution to keep me and others from going in a course of disadvantage and danger. I have given copies to Brother Colcord and others of the brethren who are teaching in Institutes, workers meetings, and camp meetings, so that it will be spread through all the body and put us all upon the safe side.

“I well remember the statement read in the General Conference of 1891, on this subject of the Bible and the Public Schools,² and ever since have made it a point to say as little as possible on that subject. I think the *Sentinel* has never touched it since, though it may have done so. But the position had been taken, the literature was out, and of course the influence went on in that direction.

“This Testimony now makes the matter very much plainer and shows how to turn the influence the other way. So that is what we are doing now. I sent out copies of it at once when I got it, and its word is being followed. The printing of literature will be stopped and everything will be done to turn all into the course pointed out by the Lord. Am glad to follow in the way He so kindly points out.”
A. T. Jones

“The Teaching Of Religion In The Public Schools”

“Evangelists should be finding their way into all the places where the minds of men are agitated over the question of Sunday legislation and of the teaching of religion in the public schools. It is the neglect of Seventh-day Adventists to improve these providential opportunities to present the truth that burdens my heart and keeps me awake night after night.”—[The Review and Herald, April 20, 1905](#). Reprinted in [Evangelism, 394-395](#).

“In our own country there is much to be done. There are many cities to be entered and warned. Evangelists should be finding their way into all the places where the minds of men are agitated over the

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²Note: This statement cannot be found.—A. L. White

question of Sunday legislation and the teaching of religion in the public schools. It is the neglect of Seventh-day Adventists to improve these providential opportunities that is hindering the advancement of the cause.”—[Testimonies for the Church 9:51](#).

School Attendance On Sabbath A Violation Of God’s Law

(Written in Europe in 1885)

“Some of our people have sent their children to school on the Sabbath. They were not compelled to do this, but the school authorities objected to receiving the children unless they should attend six days. In some of these schools, pupils are not only instructed in the usual branches of study, but are taught to do various kinds of work; and here the children of professed commandment keepers have been sent upon the Sabbath. Some parents have tried to justify their course by quoting the words of Christ, that it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day. But the same reasoning would prove that men may labor on the Sabbath because they must earn bread for their children; and there is no limit, no boundary line, to show what should and what should not be done.

“Had these dear brethren possessed greater spirituality, had they realized the binding claim of God’s law as every one of us should, they would have known their duty, and would not have been walking in darkness. It was very hard for them to see how they could take any other course. But God does not consult our convenience in regard to His commandments. He expects us to obey them, and to teach them to our children. We have before us the example of Abraham, the father of the faithful. The God of heaven says, ‘I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord.’ [Genesis 18:19](#). And this was why such great blessings were pronounced upon him and his posterity.

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“Our brethren cannot expect the approval of God while they place their children where it is impossible for them to obey the fourth commandment. They should endeavor to make some arrangement with the authorities whereby the children shall be excused from attendance at school upon the seventh day. If this fails, then their duty is plain, to obey God’s requirements at whatever cost.

“In some places in Central Europe, persons have been fined and imprisoned for not sending their children to school on the Sabbath. In one place, after a brother had plainly stated his faith, an officer of justice came to his door, and compelled the children to go to school. The parents gave them a Bible instead of their usual textbooks, and their time was spent in studying it. But wherever it can be done, our people should establish schools of their own. Where they cannot do this, they should as soon as possible remove to some place where they can be free to keep the commandments of God.

“Some will urge that the Lord is not so particular in His requirements; that it is not their duty to keep the Sabbath strictly at so great loss, or to place themselves where they will be brought in conflict with the laws of the land. But here is just where the test is coming, whether we will honor the law of God above the requirements of men. This is what will distinguish between those who honor God and those who dishonor Him. Here is where we are to prove our loyalty. The history of God’s dealings with His people in all ages shows that He demands exact obedience. [182]

“When the destroying angel was about to pass through the land of Egypt, and smite the first-born of both man and beast, the Israelites were directed to bring their children into the house with them, and to strike the doorpost with blood, and none were to go out of the house; for all that were found among the Egyptians would be destroyed with them. Suppose an Israelite had neglected to place the sign of blood upon his door, saying that the angel of God would be able to distinguish between the Hebrews and the Egyptians; would the heavenly sentinels have stood to guard that dwelling? We should take this lesson to ourselves.

“Again the destroying angel is to pass through the land. There is to be a mark placed upon God’s people, and that mark is the keeping of His holy Sabbath. We are not to follow our own will and judgment; and flatter ourselves that God will come to our terms. God tests our faith by giving us some part to act in connection with His interposition in our behalf. To those who comply with the conditions, His promises will be fulfilled; but all that venture to depart from His instructions, to follow a way of their own choosing, will perish with the wicked when His judgments are visited upon the earth.

“If parents allow their children to receive an education with the world, and make the Sabbath a common day, then the seal of God cannot be placed upon them. They will be destroyed with the world; and will not their blood rest upon the parents? But if we faithfully teach our children God’s commandments, bring them into subjection to parental authority, and then by faith and prayer commit them to God, He will work with our efforts; for He has promised it. And when the overflowing scourge shall pass through the land, they with us may be hidden in the secret of the Lord’s pavilion.”—*Historical Sketches of S.D.A. Foreign Missions*, pp. 216-217. (Republished in *Testimony Treasures*, Vol. 2, pp. 181-184.)

[183] **Meeting Legal Requirements In College Preparatory Courses**

(1903)

“All our denominational colleges and training schools should make provision to give their students the education essential for evangelists and for Christian business men. The youth and those more advanced in years who feel it their duty to fit themselves for work requiring the passing of certain legal tests should be able to secure at our Union Conference training-schools all that is essential, without having to go to Battle Creek for their preparatory education.

“Prayer will accomplish wonders for those who give themselves to prayer, watching thereunto. God desires us all to be in a waiting, hopeful position. What He has promised He will do, and if there are legal requirements making it necessary that medical students shall take a certain preparatory course of study, let our colleges teach the required additional studies in a manner consistent with Christian education. The Lord has signified His displeasure that so many of our people are drifting into Battle Creek; and since He does not want so many to go there, we should understand that He wants our schools in other places to have efficient teachers, and to do well the work that must be done. They should arrange to carry their students to the point of literary and scientific training that is necessary. Many of these requirements have been made because so much of the preparatory work done in ordinary schools is superficial. Let all our work be thorough, faithful, and true.

“In our training-schools the Bible is to be made the basis of all education. And in the required studies, it is not necessary for our teachers to bring in the objectionable books that the Lord has instructed us not to use in our schools. From the light that the Lord has given me, I know that our training-schools in various parts of the field should be placed in the most favorable position possible for qualifying our youth to meet the tests specified by state laws regarding medical students. To this end the very best teaching talent should be secured, that our schools may be brought up to the required standard.”—[The Review and Herald, October 15, 1903](#). (Republished in [Fundamentals of Christian Education](#), 489, 490.)

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Complying With Laws Establishing Requirements In Medical Training

(1909)

“Some questions have been asked me regarding our relation to the laws governing medical practitioners. We need to move understandingly, for the enemy would be pleased to hedge up our work so that our physicians would have only a limited influence. Some men do not act in the fear of God, and they may seek to bring us into trouble by placing on our necks yokes that we could not consent to bear. We cannot submit to regulations if the sacrifice of principle is involved; for this would imperil the soul’s salvation.

“But whenever we can comply with the law of the land without putting ourselves in a false position, we should do so. Wise laws have been framed in order to safeguard the people against the imposition of unqualified physicians. These laws we should respect, for we are ourselves by them protected from presumptuous pretenders. Should we manifest opposition to these requirements, it would tend to restrict the influence of our medical missionaries.

“We must carefully consider what is involved in these matters. If there are conditions to which we could not subscribe, we should endeavor to have these matters adjusted, so that there would not be strong opposition against our physicians. The Saviour bids us be wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

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“The Lord is our Leader and Teacher. He charges us not to connect with those who do not acknowledge God. ‘Verily my Sabbaths

ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations.’ Connect with those who honor God by keeping His commandments. If the recommendation goes forth from our people that our workers are to seek for success by acknowledging as essential the education which the world gives, we are virtually saying that the influence the world gives is superior to that which God gives. God will be dishonored by such a course. God has full knowledge of the faith and trust and confidence that His professed people have in His providence.

“Our workers are to become intelligent in regard to Christ’s life and manner of working. The Lord will help those who desire to cooperate with Him as physicians, if they will become learners of Him how to work for the suffering. He will exercise His power through them for the healing of the sick.”—[Medical Ministry](#), 84., 85. (Portion of a letter to J. A. Burden of Loma Linda, written Nov. 5, 1909.)

Meet State Law Entrance Requirements In Pre-Medical Training

(1913)

[186] “Especially should those who are studying medicine in the schools of the world guard against contamination from the evil influence with which they are constantly surrounded. When their instructors are worldly-wise men, and their fellow students infidels who have no serious thought of God, even Christians of experience are in danger of being influenced by these irreligious associations. Nevertheless, some have gone through the medical course, and have remained true to principle. They would not continue their studies on the Sabbath; and they have proved that men may become qualified for the duties of a physician, and not disappoint the expectations of those who have encouraged them to obtain an education.

“It is because of these peculiar temptations which our youth must meet in worldly medical schools that provision should be made for preparatory and advanced medical training in our own schools, under Christian teachers. Our larger union conference training schools in various parts of the field should be placed in the most favorable position for qualifying our youth to meet the entrance requirements

specified by state laws regarding medical students. The very best teaching talent should be secured, that our schools may be brought up to the proper standard. The youth, and those more advanced in years, who feel it their duty to fit themselves for work requiring the passing of certain legal tests, should be able to secure at our union conference training schools all that is essential for entrance into a medical college.”—*Counsels to Parents and Teachers*, p. 479 (1913).

To Meet Legal Requirements In Medical Training

(1910)

(Compiler’s note: When in January 1910 at the Pacific Union Conference Session consideration was being given to the development of a medical college at Loma Linda, and there was a division of opinion as to what was called for in the writings of Ellen G. White, a letter was addressed to her by a committee of three appointed for that purpose, consisting of Elders I. H. Evans, E. E. Andross, and H. W. Cottrell. The question was worded as follows:)

“Are we to understand from what you have written concerning the establishment of a medical school at Loma Linda, that, according to the light you have received from the Lord, we are to establish a thoroughly equipped medical school, the graduates from which will be able to take State Board examinations and become registered, qualified physicians?”

(This letter of inquiry was returned Thursday, January 27, with Ellen G. White’s reply:)

“The light given me is, We must provide that which is essential to qualify our youth who desire to be physicians, so that they may intelligently fit themselves to be able to stand the examinations required to prove their efficiency as physicians. They should be taught to treat understandingly the cases of those who are diseased, so that the door will be closed for any sensible physician to imagine that we are not giving in our school the instruction necessary for properly qualifying young men and young women to do the work of a physician. Continually the students who are graduated are to advance in knowledge, for practice makes perfect.

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“The medical school at Loma Linda is to be of the highest order, because those who are in that school have the privilege of maintaining a living connection with the wisest of all physicians, from whom there is communicated knowledge of a superior order. And for the special preparation of those of our youth who have clear convictions of their duty to obtain a medical education that will enable them to pass the examinations required by law of all who practice as regularly qualified physicians, we are to supply whatever may be required, so that these youth need not be compelled to go to medical schools conducted by men not of our faith. Thus we shall close a door that the enemy would be pleased to have left open; and our young men and young women, whose spiritual interests the Lord desires us to safeguard, will not feel compelled to connect with unbelievers in order to obtain a thorough training along medical lines.”—Ellen G. White [Manuscript 7, 1910](#). ([Pacific Union Recorder, February 3, 1910](#); see also [Medical Ministry, 57, 58](#); and [Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Students](#), pp. 480, 481.)

[188] **Wisdom And Discretion Needed In Declarations On Wartime Regulations**

“I was shown [statement published January 1863] the excitement created among our people by the article in the *Review* headed, ‘The Nation.’ Some understood it one way, and some another. The plain statements were distorted, and made to mean what the writer did not intend. He gave the best light that he then had. It was necessary that something be said. The attention of many was turned to Sabbathkeepers because they manifested no greater interest in the war and did not volunteer. In some places they were looked upon as sympathizing with the Rebellion. The time had come for our true sentiments in relation to slavery and the Rebellion to be made known. There was need of moving with wisdom to turn away the suspicions excited against Sabbathkeepers. We should act with great caution. ‘If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.’ We can obey this admonition, and not sacrifice one principle of our faith. Satan and his host are at war with command-ment keepers, and will work to bring them into trying positions. They should not by lack of discretion bring themselves there.

“I was shown that some moved very indiscreetly in regard to the article mentioned. It did not in all respects accord with their views, and instead of calmly weighing the matter, and viewing it in all its bearings, they became agitated, excited, and some seized the pen and jumped hastily at conclusions which would not bear investigation. Some were inconsistent and unreasonable. They did that which Satan is ever hurrying them to do, namely, acted out out their own rebellious feelings.

“In Iowa they carried things to quite a length, and ran into fanaticism. They mistook zeal and fanaticism for conscientiousness. Instead of being guided by reason and sound judgment, they allowed their feelings to take the lead. They were ready to become martyrs for their faith. Did all this feeling lead them to God? to greater humility before Him? Did it lead them to trust in His power to deliver them from the trying position into which they might be brought? Oh, no! Instead of making their petitions to the God of heaven and relying solely upon His power, they petitioned the legislature and were refused. They showed their weakness and exposed their lack of faith. All this only served to bring that peculiar class, Sabbathkeepers, into special notice, and expose them to be crowded into difficult places by those who have no sympathy for them.”—[Testimonies for the Church 1:356, 357](#).

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Attitude Toward The Draft

“I saw that those who have been forward to talk so decidedly about refusing to obey a draft do not understand what they are talking about. Should they really be drafted and, refusing to obey, be threatened with imprisonment, torture, or death, they would shrink and then find that they had not prepared themselves for such an emergency. They would not endure the trial of their faith. What they thought to be faith was only fanatical presumption.

“Those who would be best prepared to sacrifice even life, if required, rather than place themselves in a position where they could not obey God, would have the least to say. They would make no boast. They would feel deeply and meditate much, and their earnest prayers would go up to heaven for wisdom to act and grace to endure. Those who feel that in the fear of God they cannot conscientiously

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engage in this war will be very quiet, and when interrogated will simply state what they are obliged to say in order to answer the inquirer, and then let it be understood that they have no sympathy with the Rebellion.”—[Testimonies for the Church 1:357](#) (Jan. 1863),

The Situation Before Provision Was Made For Noncombatant Draftees

“I was shown that God’s people, who are His peculiar treasure, cannot engage in this perplexing war, for it is opposed to every principle of their faith. In the army they cannot obey the truth and at the same time obey the requirements of their officers.³ There would be a continual violation of conscience. Worldly men are governed by worldly principles. They can appreciate no other.

“Worldly policy and public opinion comprise the principle of action that governs them and leads them to practice the form of rightdoing. But God’s people cannot be governed by these motives. The words and commands of God, written in the soul, are spirit and life, and there is power in them to bring into subjection and enforce obedience. The ten precepts of Jehovah are the foundation of all righteous and good laws.

“Those who love God’s commandments will conform to every good law of the land. But if the requirements of the rulers are such as conflict with the laws of God, the only question to be settled is: Shall we obey God, or man?”—[Testimonies for the Church 1:361, 362](#).

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Light Given Concerning The Draft

(From an E. G. White letter written Dec. 8, 1886, to G. I. Butler and S. N. Haskell)

“You inquire in regard to the course which should be pursued to secure the rights of our people to worship according to the dictates of our own conscience. This has been a burden of my soul for some time, whether it would be a denial of our faith and an evidence that

³Note: Written at a time when military service was on a voluntary basis and there was no provision for non-combatants in army service. See note in [Testimonies for the Church 1:716, 717](#) (1948 printing).

our trust was not fully in God. But I call to mind many things God has shown me in the past in regard to things of a similar character, as the draft and other things. I can speak in the fear of God, it is right we should use every power we can to avert the pressure that is being brought to bear upon our people.”—[Letter 55, 1886](#). Published in [Selected Messages 2:334, 335](#).

Required Military Drill

(Written in Switzerland Sept. 2, 1886)

“We have just said farewell to three of our responsible men in the office who were summoned by the government to serve for three weeks of drill. It was a very important stage of our work in the publishing house, but the government calls do not accommodate themselves to our convenience. They demand that young men whom they have accepted as soldiers shall not neglect the exercise and drill essential for soldier service. We were glad to see that these men with their regimentals had tokens of honor for faithfulness in their work. They were trustworthy young men.

“These did not go from choice, but because the laws of their nation required this. We gave them a word of encouragement to be found true soldiers of the cross of Christ. Our prayers will follow these young men, that the angels of God may go with them and guard them from every temptation.—[Manuscript 33, 1886](#). (Published in [Selected Messages 2:335](#).)

One Law Seventh-day Adventists Could Not Obey

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“The fugitive slave law was calculated to crush out of man every noble, generous feeling of sympathy that should arise in his heart for the oppressed and suffering slave. It was in direct opposition to the teaching of Christ.”—[Testimonies for the Church 1:264](#).

“The law of our land requiring us to deliver a slave to his master, we are not to obey; and we must abide the consequences of violating this law. The slave is not the property of any man. God is his rightful master, and man has no right to take God’s workmanship into his hands, and claim him as his own.”—[Testimonies for the Church 1:202](#).

Involvement In Labor Unions ⁴

“The work of the people of God is to prepare for the events of the future, which will soon come upon them with blinding force. In the world gigantic monopolies will be formed. Men will bind themselves together in unions that will wrap them in the folds of the enemy. A few men will combine to grasp all the means to be obtained in certain lines of business. Trades unions will be formed, and those who refuse to join these unions will be marked men.... These unions are one of the signs of the last days. Men are binding up in bundles ready to be burned. They may be church members, but while they belong to these unions, they cannot possibly keep the commandments of God; for to belong to these unions means to disregard the entire Decalogue.

[193] “‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself’ ([Luke 10:27](#)). These words sum up the whole duty of man. They mean the consecration of the whole being, body, soul, and spirit, to God’s service. How can men obey these words, and at the same time pledge themselves to support that which deprives their neighbors of freedom of action? And how can men obey these words, and form combinations that rob the poorer classes of the advantages which justly belong to them, preventing them from buying or selling, except under certain conditions? How plainly the words of God have predicted this condition of things. John writes, ‘I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon... And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads; and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name’ ([Revelation 13:11-17](#)).

“The forming of these unions is one of Satan’s last efforts. God calls upon His people to get out of the cities, isolating themselves from the world. The time will come when they will have to do this. God will care for those who love Him and keep His commandments.”—[Letter 26, 1903](#). (Portion published in [Selected Messages 2:142, 143](#).)

⁴Note: Additional material on unions is found in [Selected Messages 2:141-144](#)

Deplorable State Of Society

“In all our great cities there will be a binding up in bundles by the confederacies and unions formed. Men will rule other men and demand much of them. The lives of those who refuse to unite with these unions, will be in peril. Everything is being prepared for the last great work to be done by the One mighty to save and mighty to destroy....

“The condition of things before the flood has been presented to me. The same binding up in unions that exists today existed in Noah’s day. But never before have such transactions taken place as are now carried on in the selection of officers to govern the people. Those who occupy the highest positions in governments reveal how little confidence God can place in their rulership. [194]

“This is a wonderful age in which we are living. God is beholding the deplorable state of society. He requires those who believe His gospel to come out from the world. ‘Be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing.’”—[Manuscript 145, 1902](#). (Written Sept. 2, 1902.)

Influence At The Nation’s Capital

“Now is our time to press to the front in Washington. A decided testimony must be borne to the people in the national capital, and this work must not rest upon a few.

“A most important work is to be done in Washington, and I inquire whether you do not need the help of those who in years past have stood prominently for religious liberty.

“As we work with all our might, our trust must be in God. Sooner or later Sunday laws will be passed. ⁵ But there is much for God’s servants to do to warn the people. This work has been greatly retarded by their having to wait and stand against the devisings of Satan, which have been striving to find a place in our work. We are years behind.

“God’s law is to be vindicated, by the obedience of heart and mind, and by strong arguments.... [195]

⁵Note: A great deal is written on the Sunday law issue. This could not be included in this compilation.—A. L. White.

“The time has come when the liberty of the church of Christ is endangered. Let it be a time also when true missionary work shall be done, in public ministry and in house-to-house labor. The oppression of Christ’s church would apparently be a great victory for the side of transgressors of the Sabbath, and would cause rejoicing among evil-doers. But nothing should discourage us. God has victory for His people. Let sanctified ability be brought into the work of proclaiming the truth for this time. If the forces of the enemy gain the victory now, it will be because the churches have neglected their God-given work....

“Instruction has been given me that the important books containing the light that God has given regarding Satan’s apostasy in heaven should be given wide circulation just now; for through them the truth will reach many minds. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, *Daniel and the Revelation*, and *Great Controversy* are needed now as never before. They should be widely circulated because the truths they emphasize will open many blind eyes.

“When *Patriarchs and Prophets* was first issued, it was neglected for books easy to sell and more profitable to the publishers. Many of our people have been blind to the importance of the very books that were most needed. Had tact and skill then been shown in the sale of these books, the Sunday law movement would not be where it is today.

[196] “I am glad that the Lord has at Washington able men, who can treat this Sunday movement as it should be treated. Let every minister, every evangelist, now put on the whole armor of God, and work and watch and pray. Our church members also should humble their hearts before God, and cry aloud, and spare not. O that the Lord would imbue the members of His church with a sense of the importance of the responsibility of being laborers together with Him!”—[The Review and Herald, February 16, 1905](#), p. 12.

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